THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 18 June, 1936 Number 6

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VOLUME 18 JUNE, 1936 NUMBER 6

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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The Financial Position of the Labour Monthly for 1936

IT was in September, 1934, that the LABOUR MONTHLY launched a Special Appeal for support in order to meet the situation then existing. For though our circulation was rising nevertheless, owing to the special difficulties that face a journal of the type of the LABOUR MONTHLY to which we refer in more detail below, the LABOUR MONTHLY had then an accumulated debt of £480 and had to meet a monthly deficit in addition of £29.

To prevent the MONTHLY from having to close down the Editorial Board felt that the readers would rally to our Special Appeal to two funds ; one a Debt Fund to meet the accumulated Debt, and the other a Guarantee Fund which would assure the continuance of the MONTHLY by going towards covering its monthly deficit.

In the March issue last year, a detailed review was given of the whole position of the MONTHLY showing not only the improvement that had been secured by the results of this Special Appeal, but how at the same time the circulation had registered a further increase.

With the facts we give below, readers will be able to see how the Special Appeal has brought results and, along with the rising circulation, has very definitely improved the situation of the MONTHLY. At the same time they will see that the Appeal still urgently needs further response if the MONTHLY'S future is really to be made secure.

CIRCULATION.

The total print of the LABOUR MONTHLY for the first three months of this year stood at just on 7,000 of each issue as against 4,800 for the first six months of 1934, and 5,400 for the opening of 1935. The average monthly returns of unsold copies is 510 or 7.2 per cent.

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The distribution of this circulation shows a further increase, both in Britain and overseas, as follows :

	First six months	January, 1935	Feb.-March, 1936	Increase of 1936 on 1935
Britain ..	3,120	3,399	4,498	1,099
America ..	738	770	789	19
Australasia ..	521	552	555	3
Europe.. ..	65	149	389	240
Africa	64	91	220	129
Asia	28	49	39	*—10*
	4,536	5,010	6,490	1,480 (net)

Apart from the drop of 10 copies per month in the circulation in Asia, the chief item to note in this table is the very big rise that has been recorded for Britain. This rise of 1,099 compares with a rise of 279 at the beginning of 1935 as against the average for the first 6 months of 1934.

It may be recalled that last year while we took pride in the fact that an all-round increase in the overseas circulation could be recorded as testifying to the international character of the MONTHLY, nevertheless, as we said, the main basis of the circulation must necessarily lie in Britain. With the splendid co-operation of our readers the above most welcome increase in the circulation in Britain has led to this basis being now much more firmly laid.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 1935.

The total income and expenditure of the LABOUR MONTHLY for the year 1935, summarised under the main items, is as follows :

INCOME.	£	EXPENDITURE.	£
Sales and Subscriptions ..	1,136	Printing, Binding and Paper	1,009
Advertisements	40	Premises, Lighting, Heating and Telephone	101
Guarantees (excluding £235 of Donations to Debt Fund)	135	Office Manager	164
Deficit	124	Stationery	107
		Advertising..	54
	£1,435		£1,435

While the deficit still remains, there is a very definite improvement on the previously published figures of 1935. The increased

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income on sales of £176 has more than covered the increased cost of printing, resulting from the rising circulation ; in fact, already quite a considerable surplus is now available to meet the other costs of publication. We would here again remind our readers that no contributors to the LABOUR MONTHLY are paid and the editorial work is conducted by a group of members of the working-class movement as a voluntary collective work.

The net deficit, if we include the amount covered by guarantees, shows a total of £259, or just on £22 a month. This, it will be seen, is a definite reduction on the figure given for 1935 in March last year of £339 and £28 a month respectively. This £22 is the sum we need to try to cover by guarantees until such time as the LABOUR MONTHLY becomes completely self-supporting.

THE DEBT FUND AND THE GUARANTEE FUND.

In September, 1934, we launched an appeal for two funds : (1) A Debt Fund to liquidate the accumulated debt then totalling £480 ; (2) a Guarantee Fund or system of pledges from readers to pay a definite sum to help to cover the current deficit.

In the nineteen months since this Appeal has been launched up to March of this year, the very respectable total of £334 has been donated to the Debt Fund. In view of the ever-increasing demands which are being made on all sides of the movement, this seems to be a very encouraging response and one for which we want to express our great appreciation to all who have contributed often at very considerable personal sacrifice. Unfortunately, however, the whole of this sum has not led to an equivalent reduction in the net amount of the Debt of £480 ; for this money has had to go to liquidate both the old debt of £480 and the lesser amount of new debt which has been accumulating owing to the still existing gap between the Guarantee Fund and the total monthly deficit. The net diminution is less than the total raised : but the net debt at the beginning of the current quarter has been brought down from the £480, at which it originally stood, to the figure of £290.

The Guarantee Fund, which stood at £18 at the end of last year, owing to a number of the original guarantors having

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to cease their guarantees, now stands at £15. There thus remains £7 a month to raise in order to cover the existing deficit.

OUR APPEAL.

These are the full facts that we place before our readers without adornment or concealment. On this basis we again appeal for a redoubled effort of support, with full confidence in the response of our readers and in their judgment that the work the LABOUR MONTHLY is achieving, and can achieve, is worthy of support. The LABOUR MONTHLY has no sources of support outside its readers. By the further development of circulation and in part by the winning of advertisements, we shall be able to make the LABOUR MONTHLY eventually self-supporting. That 1935 has marked a stage towards this aim the circulation figures have shown, and as we have pointed out they have been reflected very considerably in the finances. But just as this drive for circulation has only been achieved by a considerable amount of extra work on the part of all concerned, so further and increased efforts will have to be made to reach towards our objective. But meanwhile the difficulties which inevitably confront a political theoretical journal of this type must necessarily be faced.

We appeal accordingly to all our readers for :

(1) Pledges of £7 a month for the Guarantee Fund to make the total up to £22 a month.

(2) Donations to the Debt Fund to wipe out the present net debt of £290.

A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY APPEAL.

But this month we feel that to mark the 15th anniversary of the foundation of the LABOUR MONTHLY in July, 1921, readers would like to send an extra special birthday gift to the MONTHLY and accordingly we are inserting a Birthday Card in this issue, which we hope all who can will fill up and return.

Current acknowledgments to both Funds will be found on page 384.

R. P. D.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The People's Front—France, Spain, China—Lessons for Britain —No Mechanical Transference—Origin of the People's Front— Working Class Unity the Basis—Initiative of the Communist Party—Contrast to Parliamentary Coalition Policies—Mass-Basis—Future of the People's Front in France—The Blum Government and the Communist Party—Lessons from Spain—The United States and the Farmer-Labour Party—Situation in Britain—Working Class Unity the Key— "Liberal-Labour" Travesties—Confusions on the People's Front—The Pivot of Change in Britain.

WITHIN one year and a half of the first broaching of the conception in any country, to-day the "People's Front" is dominating the political situation in a series of countries both inside and outside Europe, and is in the forefront of discussion in all countries. This is a very significant example of the power of living Marxist theory to anticipate political needs, and by anticipating them to shape events. In France, in Spain, in a series of South Americar countries and in China the People's Front has registered a series of successes. These successes are already exercising a far-reaching effect on the international political situation, in strengthening the front against the fascist war offensive and encouraging the popular forces in all countries, and are likely to have still further effect as the situation develops. In the other countries, where such a front has not yet been realised, the impetus towards its realisation is strong and the problems involved have become the centre of widespread discussion. The discussion has shown, however, that there is still considerable need to clear further these problems, and to find the path to remove out of the way the obstacles that still block the path of realisation of this basic aim in the special conditions of countries such as Britain.

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THE immediate cause of this wide present interest in the conception of the People's Front, and impetus towards its realisation in the countries where it does not yet exist, lies undoubtedly in the brilliant recent victories achieved by this method in France and Spain, where it has shown its power to turn the tide of fascist reaction and to open the road to new advance, as also in its less widely heralded success in China, where it is also transforming the situation, building up a united national front of resistance to the Japanese invasion and already leading to a process of differentiation within the Chiang Kai Shek government. But while the immediate impetus of any merely imitative response in other countries may prove temporary, in proportion as the extremely complicated problems of the further development of the line unfold themselves, also in France and Spain, the deeper cause of this wide response in all countries evidently lies in the fact that the conception reflects deeply felt needs of the present stage, the need of a wide massing of forces against the offensive of reaction, against fascism and against the present ever more menacing war offensive. Such a massing of forces is essential if we are to win the present battle for peace and against reaction, and thus prepare the way for further advance on the basis of the mobilisation of the majority of the population around the leadership of the working class against monopoly capital.

UNDOUBTEDLY the examples of the popular victories in France and in Spain are a powerful lesson for England. They demonstrate the possibilities of the popular surge of advance against fascism and against war which is developing throughout the world (the Japanese elections in February revealed the same lesson, with the strong swing to the left, the routing of the open fascist candidates, and the over half-million votes for the workers' and peasants' *bloc* under conditions of terrorism ; the immediately following fascist murder-coup was the fascist answer to these results.) The anger of the peoples against fascism, against the fascist war offensive, and against the policies of capitulation and division which have smoothed the path to these, is rising ; the problem is to find

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the forms and leadership to give it expression. It is a matter for profound mortification that in this general popular advance Britain should be the black spot, where the existing dominant reactionary policies and leadership of the Labour Party are still able to thwart and choke popular expression, and the National Government is still able to hold power as the bulwark of fascism, reaction and the war offensive throughout the world. The contrast between the election defeat in England and the election victories in France and Spain is a merciless contrast between the outcome of the policies of division and passive capitulation and the outcome of the policies of unity and mass action. In France and Spain they had the united front of socialists and communists ; they had the people's front ; they had active mass fight throughout the country ; they directed the fight on class lines against the finance-capitalist and landlord oligarchy ; they fought the foreign policy of capitulation to fascism ; and on this basis they conquered. In Britain, under the leadership of the Labour Party, denouncing unity, opposing the class struggle, applauding the foreign policy of the National Government, assisting Hitler, all this basis of fight was lacking, and the outcome was defeat. These lessons must be learned.

THESE lessons, however, cannot be transferred mechanically, but require to be learned in principle, and worked out freshly in relation to specific conditions. The form of realisation of the necessary mass concentration of forces against reaction and war requires to correspond to the widely differing conditions in different countries ; there is no ready-made formula. The magic of the People's Front does not lie in the title ; the secret lies in the application of certain principles to the actual relations of class forces. In France and in Spain the correct forms appropriate to the situation in those countries has been found. In Britain, the United States and other countries their realisation is still a considerable way off, and many preliminary steps are needed. The current discussion in Liberal and Labour circles in Britain and other countries of the possibilities of the People's Front can be of

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great use ; but at present it reveals widespread misconceptions even going so far as a failure to understand the elementary difference between the " Front Populaire " and the old " Cartel des Gauches," or electoral-parliamentary Left *Bloc*. In consequence, it may be of use to endeavour to clear further in principle and in practice the conception of the People's Front, both in relation to the countries where it has been realised, in France and in Spain, and in relation to the possibilities in such countries as Britain and the United States.

THE conception of the People's Front was first formulated in any country on October 24, 1934, by Maurice Thorez, Secretary of the French Communist Party, in a speech at Nantes where the Radical Party Congress was being held. In this connection the book of Thorez which has recently appeared, entitled *France To-day and the People's Front*, is extremely timely, and should greatly help in bringing about a clearer understanding in England of the principles and methods of the People's Front.* Thorez sticks closely to his subject of the concrete situation, the specific steps of advance and the rival programmes in France ; he does not concern himself with discussing in any detail the future line of development ; on some questions, notably in the sphere of foreign policy, and on the problems in connection with the government to follow the elections, he might with advantage have written more fully. But his concrete analysis, if carefully studied, serves to bring out very clearly the underlying principles of the People's Front. It is impossible for any one to read this account without learning to understand the very clear analysis of class forces on which the whole policy is based, and the consequent line worked out in relation to the given class structure.

WHAT stands out from this analysis ? First, the united working class front was fully realised in France before the conception of the People's Front arose. This does not mean that the same chronological order must always be necessary ; it is conceivable that in some cases the realisation

**France To-day and the People's Front.* By Maurice Thorez. Gollancz. 5s.

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of a broad popular front may smooth the path to the realisation of working-class unity. But it does demonstrate the fact that the core of such a broad popular front must be the united working class forces, consciously pursuing their independent class line within any combination, if such a combination is not to be an unprincipled amalgam of disparate elements, in which the working class is in reality taken in tow by the bourgeoisie. The leadership of the working class is essential in a common popular front ; and this leadership requires working-class unity. The fight for working-class unity was first carried through by the Communist Party right up to its realisation in July, 1934. The opposition of the Socialist Party leadership was steadily broken down by mass pressure from below ; the united front was not realised at a blow, but was built up by tireless effort, locally in the first place, also through non-party organisations such as the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement, then extending to regional federations, and finally reaching its realisation at the top in the Unity Pact of July 27, 1934. Then only, in October, 1934, followed the first proposition from the Communist Party for the further extension and reinforcing of the United working-class front by the People's Front.

SECOND, the initiative for the People's Front came at each stage from the Communist Party, at first against the hesitations and opposition of the Socialist Party. What is the significance of this ? The significance is once again the demonstration of the hegemony of the working class within a broad popular front, without which it can only become an instrument of the bourgeoisie. This principle of the hegemony of the working class was expressed by the initiative of the Communist Party. In October, 1934, the Communist Party put forward the first proposition for " a People's Front for liberty, work and peace." In December, 1934, the Communist Party put forward the proposal for the building of local elected Committees of the People's Front throughout the country. In May, 1935, the Communist Party parliamentary fraction (i.e., *after* the mass basis had been built) invited the other parliamentary groups, Socialists, Pupists, Radicals, etc.,

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to a common meeting at which the lines of co-operation were drawn up. On July 14, 1935, the People's Front was sealed by the oath of ten thousand elected delegates, repeated by demonstrations of hundreds of thousand the same day. In January, 1936, the Programme of the People's Front was published. The recognition by the Radicals of the rôle of the Communist Party in building this common front was testified by the Radical journal, *La République :*

> Generations to come will thank the Communist Party for the important part it played in the formation of the People's Front. (*La République*, January 7, 1936.)

THIRD, the building up of the People's Front on this basis and in this manner marks out its distinction from the old type of electoral-parliamentary left *bloc* combination or "Cartel des Gauches," or from earlier types of left collaborationism, which subjected the working class to the leadership of the bourgeoisie. Thorez explains in the following terms the line of the Communist Party "to avoid the twofold errors of Jaurès and of Guesde at the time of the Dreyfus affair":

> Jaurès let himself be taken in tow by the middle-class democracy, and did not sufficiently guard the special interests of the working class and the independence of its party in the course of supporting the Liberal sections of the capitalists against the reactionary sections, who drew their support from the Church and the General Staff. On the other hand, Guesde, lacking tactical flexibility, to some extent placed himself right outside a conflict which had roused considerable masses of the people.
>
> The Communist Party refuses to treat all capitalist parties as "a single reactionary mass," or to believe that on the social chessboard there are only two forces, two great armies facing each other —the capitalist army and the socialist army. Such a conception of things is too simple.
>
> The proletariat, while pursuing its own aims, must secure alliances, whether temporary or lasting, with the peasant masses and the democratic middle classes, in order to prevent the victory of Fascism in France and to change the relation of forces on the international scale in favour of the proletariat. The People's Front is the gathering together of all the forces of labour exploited by the capitalists and menaced by Fascism. . . . . It is constantly drawing into the fight

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> new masses, new social strata outside the proletariat, but drawn into its orbit because the proletariat is the driving force in all activities against Fascism and the organiser of the people's victories over its enemies." (pp. 177-8.)

In this explanation are involved the fundamental conceptions of the People's Front, the basic principles applicable in varying forms to all countries.

"THE People's Front," explains Thorez, "cannot be compared with the groupings for the purpose of collaboration between the working class and the capitalist class, of which we find only too many examples in the history of the Third Republic in France before the war and in the history of Germany and Austria after the war." Why? First, because the leadership is in the hands of the working class; the petit-bourgeois elements, only after an inner struggle and a break of the majority from the previous direct links with the big bourgeoisie (reflected in the conflict and split in the Radical Party) came over towards the leadership of the working class. Second, because the basis of the People's Front is a *mass basis*: in place of the usual electoral-parliamentary combination on top, it is rooted in the masses, in the local elected Committees of the People's Front through the country. This is the aspect of the People's Front which arouses the strongest anger and alarm of the bourgeois press organs in France. And this is the aspect which is least understood in discussion in other countries when political wiseacres propound the old types of "liberal-labour" parliamentary combination in the name of the idea of the "People's Front." Without this mass basis the parliamentary co-operation of the party representatives in France would be a brittle and dangerous reed; the parliamentary rôle can only have value as the reflection of the will and activity of the masses.

WHAT of the future of the People's Front in France? Critical tasks and problems now lie before the People's Front following its electoral victory. It is essential to utilise the situation created by this victory in order to smash

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completely every unit of fascist organisation, and every hold of reaction and fascism in the official services, the police and the army. Politically, this is the most important task before the new Government to be formed ; the effectiveness in fulfilling this task will be decisive for the next stage, since the forces of fascism and reaction lie in wait to take advantage of every mistake and weakness in order to create confusion, first financial and economic, then political, and strike their blow ; and the effectiveness in carrying out this task will finally depend, not on paper decrees, but on securing the active co-operation of the masses throughout the country. Second, it is essential to carry through the fight for the agreed programme of immediate economic demands of the masses against the finance-capitalist oligarchy. Third, it is essential to carry through the fight for the foreign policy of peace against the pro-fascist tendencies in foreign policy.

THESE are the tasks of the new Blum Government to be formed on the basis of the support of the People's Front. On the other hand, the masses composing the People's Front are not yet ready to advance further to basic attack against the existing class régime. The situation in France will necessarily develop further to acute struggles, in the course of which the masses will increasingly convince themselves of the necessity for basic change. The Communist Party, in accordance with its clearly defined pre-election statements, gives full support to the new Government to carry through these urgently necessary measures of the present stage of fight, without directly participating in the Government. The task of the Communist Party lies with the masses in the development of the mass front. The standpoint of the Communist Party was proclaimed by Thorez in a speech on May 15 :

> We shall not participate, although we wish at all costs the success of the People's Front both in the parliamentary sphere and in the sphere of government. . . . We shall support effectively the government of to-morrow by the development of popular committees ; for what can be secured in parliament can only be secured through the will and activity of the masses. We shall not participate, because we wish our country to go further ; Soviet Power, that is our faith

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> and our certainty, demonstrated by the example and the life of our brothers of the Soviet Union ; under the leadership of a united party of the working class we shall realise the creation of a new society.

Once again on the Communist Party lies the key rôle, alike for the strengthening of the People's Front and of the Government based on it, and for further advance.

IF we turn from France to Spain, we find there a different situation. In Spain a revolutionary cycle is developing since 1931. The struggle against fascism has already developed to the point of armed warfare in 1934 ; and the armed battles of 1934 (deplored at the time by right wing social democracy of the German and British type as vain and useless struggle, doomed to defeat) laid the basis for the triumphant advance of the People's Front in 1936 and the discomfiture—though not yet the smashing—of fascism. But here again certain basic principles of the People's Front are demonstrated. The core of the People's Front is once again the united working class front, uniting socialists and communists in a single phalanx. The united front of socialists and communists was realised in September, 1934 ; the People's Front was realised in January, 1936. And here again the basis of the People's Front is no mere electoral-parliamentary combination, but the united action of the masses in struggle. This is the heart of the meaning of the People's Front.

WHAT of the lessons of the victories of the People's Front for the countries where the People's Front does not yet exist ? Here again it is necessary to distinguish sharply the different situations. The People's Front is one thing in the capitalist-democratic countries, another in the fascist countries, and another in the colonial countries. Here for the moment we are concerned with the immediate lessons and problems for the other leading capitalist-democratic countries, especially the United States and Britain. But between these two countries also the conditions differ completely. In the United States the mass of the workers

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still follow the two old capitalist parties, especially the Democratic Party, although discontent with both increases and a host of varied and contradictory tendencies towards a "third party" are visible. There is only a tiny Socialist Party, with a more restricted influence than the Communist Party, and no Labour Party. The main task here clearly lies in the development of a united Farmer-Labour Party, on the basis of the mass organisations of the workers, the farmers and the progressive elements of the urban petty bourgeoisie, with the united working class vanguard playing the leading rôle in its development and organisation. This line has favourable possibilities in the growth of the left wing in the American Federation of Labour, expressed in the fight for industrial unionism, and has rallied the support in principle of about one third of the American Federation of Labour. On the other hand, the recent formation by a group of left wing trade union leaders of the so-called Non-Partisan Committee, actually for the support of Roosevelt, has complicated the situation. The movement towards a Farmer-Labour Party develops in a series of localities; and the outcome of the national convention called by the Minnesota Farmer-Labour Party to explore the possibilities for the formation of a nation-wide Farmer-Labour Party will be awaited with interest.

FINALLY in Britain the situation is here also fully distinct in character. The industrial proletariat constitutes the decisive majority of the population, to an extent without parallel in any other country. The radicalisation of the petty bourgeois elements goes forward, but does not yet find effective political expression. The old Liberal Party is in disintegration, but remains a party of sections of the big bourgeoisie, not a party of the petty bourgeoisie comparable to the French Radical-Socialist Party. The Labour Party appears as a federal body of the working class organisations, with its individual membership also open to petty bourgeois elements. But behind this form the Labour Party still continues in its official policy and leadership a rigid social democratic line of refusal of working class unity, rejection of the class struggle and

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exclusion of militant working class elements ; and at the same time by this rigid line, reflecting the domination of the right wing labour bureaucracy, thwarts also the effective participation of the radicalised elements of the petty bourgeoisie, and fails to win the support of the majority of the population.

IT is clear that here the key to advance lies in the development and transformation of the Labour Party as a real united coalition party of all the working class forces, abandoning the discriminatory regulations and accepting the affiliation of the Communist Party. Once the Labour Party is thus re-vitalised and able to lead and express a united working class, it can also win the co-operation of the radicalised elements of the petty bourgeoisie, who at present seek vainly for a political home, expressing equal disappointment with the older parties and with the Labour Party ; and it can win their co-operation either directly, within the broad framework of its constitution, giving them a larger field of direct expression and participation in policy, or through such special forms of co-operation as may develop, as in the broad anti-fascist movements, etc. But the decisive key to advance lies in the realisation of the united working-class front and its expression in the Labour Party ; on this depends the next stage of advance and the concentration of the fight against the National Government. This does not mean that there is not already now, before the united working class front is realised on a nation-wide scale, room and scope for fruitful co-operation between the militant working class elements and the radicalised petty bourgeoisie in special fields of struggle, *e.g.*, in the fight for civil liberties against reaction and fascism, in the fight for peace against the war offensive, etc. These developments already going forward prepare the way for a wide common front ; but there is not yet here the solution of the problem of the People's Front ; the solution of this requires the realisation of working class unity.

FROM the examination we have made of the whole conception of the People's Front it is evident that the proposals at the moment put forward by certain bour-

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geois-liberal journalists and right wing elements of the Labour Party for some form of Liberal-Labour combination, or Liberal-Labour-I.L.P. combination (excluding Communism as "too extreme") as a supposed form of realisation of the "People's Front" in Britain is a travesty which bears no relation to the People's Front. This is only a reactionary move to save the dying remnants of the Liberal Party and the right wing domination of the Labour Party against the advance of the united working class front, and therefore also against the People's Front. These stale calculations in terms of parliamentary combinations see only with greedy eyes the figures of the election returns in France, but they do not understand their meaning; they do not see the heart of the People's Front, in its basis in the masses and in its basis in the unity of the working class.

A VARIANT of a similar tendency is to be found in a recent article of G. D. H. Cole, entitled "Planning and Socialism," in the *New Statesman and Nation* of May 9, 1936. The writer discusses the question of the People's Front in relation to France, Spain and Britain, but appears to confuse the question with the economic "planning" of the De Man type, and sees neither the mass basis of the People's Front, nor the basis in working class unity. Of the People's Front in France he writes in terms of the familiar legend of the boulevard press:—

> The Franco-Soviet Pact converted the Communists into allies of the Socialists and Radicals.

The intensified Communist fight for the united front dates from March, 1933; the Unity Pact of Communists and Socialists was reached in July, 1934; the People's Front was proposed by the Communists in October, 1934; the Franco-Soviet Pact was first drawn up and initialled in May, 1935. Cole continues, after touching on the rôle of fascism in uniting the democratic parties in France:

> In Great Britain, however, there has been no comparable pressure upon the democratic forces to join hands.

The National Government in Britain has continued for five years, has carried through its offensive of reaction in every field, constitutes the central bulwark of fascism and of the

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fascist war offensive throughout the world ; and yet the urgency of this fight is not seen, because open fascism is still weak. Finally Cole makes his proposal :

> I am by no means suggesting the expediency of a Liberal-Labour alliance. Far from it ; parliamentary Liberalism is highly unpromising material for any Front Populaire designed to further a constructive policy. I have in mind rather a more openly friendly and collaborative attitude towards individuals at present outside the Labour ranks, but largely at one with the immediate objectives of Labour policy. For what the Labour cause needs most of all to-day is a strengthening of personnel."

" A strengthening of personnel " as the form of realisation of the People's Front in Britain ! In place of the politics of masses we have the politics of " individuals." But the " strengthening of personnel " is also in reality a mass political question, and the solution lies below, not on top.

THE sterility and stagnation of the present official Labour Party at the existing stage is complained of on all sides and by all wings. But they do not yet see the cause ; that this is only the reflection of the surgical operation which has deprived the Labour Party of its lifeblood, of its driving energy, the militant vanguard. The exclusion of the Communists and militant sympathisers from the Labour Party is far more than a question of the numbers involved ; it is a question of the leadership that Communism represents and of the class-power that class unity can achieve. *These political surgeons have first castrated the bull of Labour, and now complain that the resultant ox lacks life and fire.* For those who would seek to realise the People's Front in Britain, the first immediate task is to transform the Labour Party into a real coalition party of all the working class forces, with the support of the popular forces, in Britain, based on and reflecting the mass struggle ; and all else will follow from this. The affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party is the pivot for decisive change in the political situation in Britain ; once this is achieved, new life will develop in Labour politics, and the way will be open, not only to a powerful mass front of the working class, but to a powerful mass front of all the popular forces. This is the next stage in the fight for a People's Front in Britain.

R.P.D.

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PROBLEMS OF LABOUR POLICY

[*At the beginning of this year in view of the many issues arising out of the General Election in relation to the future of Labour policy the* LABOUR MONTHLY *decided to invite Labour M.P.s, Labour Candidates and others active in the Labour Movement to contribute their views with especial reference to last December Notes of the Month by R.P.D. entitled "After the Election," and the article by W. Rust, "The Future of the Labour Party" in the January issue. The following contributions are a further series of the replies to this invitation : the names of previous contributors will be found at the conclusion.*]

I.

By ANEURIN BEVAN, M.P.

(*In an interview*).

I attach more importance to the democratisation of the organisation of the Labour Party than to any other of R.P.D.'s points.[1] If the organisation could be changed to give the rank and file of the trade unions and the Labour Party an effective voice in policy, the Party would be revolutionised. Touring the country one is struck by the militancy of the rank and file everywhere. If that latent militancy could impinge upon the making of policy, the policy would be bound to become much more robust. As it is the constitution enfranchises the bureaucracy and disfranchises the rank and file.

It is a travesty of the facts to say that the trade unions dominate the Party. It is the trade union official, who is necessarily a Safety First Man, who dominates it.

In the last twenty years the trade unions have become much more centralised which means that a high proportion of officials are elected by the Executive and the General Secretary and not by the rank and file. The principle of *selection* has taken the place of the principle of *election.* trade union officials now become "yes men," otherwise they won't get selected. If elected by the rank and file there is a far better chance of "no men" being elected—the intransigeants. By this change in the method of election a far less virile leadership has grown up and the Labour Party is under the domination of this leadership.

[1] In his Notes of the Month entitled "The Labour Party Discussion" in the April issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY.

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Most of the faults of the Labour Party are traceable to this cause. The election of the Labour Party Executive reflects the viciousness of the system. Trade union officials barter with each other at Labour Party conferences over the election of the Labour Party executive. In effect they say, " If you back our man, we'll back yours." As a result, as a glance at the personnel of the Labour Party executive shows, it consists of elderly trade union officials, executive members of trade unions, who regard their work on the Labour Party executive as subordinate to their official duties in the trade unions. If the National Executive had to go to a vote of the rank and file hardly a half dozen of them would secure election. Most of them are practically unknown to the workers. Yet day-to-day Labour Party policy is under the control of this body, a body that is unrepresentative, insulated from the rank and file's wishes and proposals, and taking its inspiration not from the movement as a whole, but from the head offices of the unions.

There is one remedy for all this. The trade union branch membership must be enfranchised in the Labour Party. To do this it is necessary to secure that affiliation fees of the trade unions be paid to the Labour Party from the trade union branches through the divisional parties and thence to the head office. By this method the divisional party delegate at a National Labour Party conference would be able to vote his industrial membership as well as his political membership and the block vote would disappear. The block vote arises from the payment of trade union affiliation fees directly from the head office of the unions to the head office of the Labour Party. If instead the union branch paid the affiliation fee to the divisional parties, the mass membership of the unions would begin to have a say in determining Party policy.

There is no other effective way of making Labour Party conferences accessible to the trade union rank and file. Trade union conferences to discuss Labour Party policy would be useless. The organisations are too unwieldy and branches couldn't be properly consulted, and many trade unions hold their conferences only once every two years.

Those that pay the piper should call the tune. It's the trade union rank and file who supply the finances so why shouldn't they determine the policy ? Why should a handful of trade union leaders bully the conference every year by waving block votes that represent nothing but a conspiracy of headquarters and have little or no relationship to their own rank and file. This is not a proposal to hand the Labour Party over to the politicians. It is a proposal to give to the trade unions the place to which they are entitled—a dominant voice in the councils of the Party.

The Trades Union Congress has lately been preoccupied very largely with political questions and their industrial responsibilities have gone by default. I wish to establish an intimate relationship between the trade

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unions and the Labour Party, and create an organisation in which the working class in their trade unions can initiate and direct the policy of the party in which they are members, of which they are the parents, and to which they contribute the bulk of the funds.

One of the main difficulties is that the trade union movement is coeval with the life of trade union leaders. The pioneer giveth, the pioneer taketh away, blessed be the name of the pioneer !

In his contribution to the discussion last month, Mr. Hicks said that one of the main problems is one of recruitment. Mr. Hicks is right, but into what are the recruits to be recruited ? To a branch which is effectively emasculated from any share in making Labour Party policy. If the branch had its share in directing Party policy, it would be the recruiting ground ; if instead of being a place of dry-as-dust meetings about last meeting's minutes, it was a place where they were asked to discuss vital problems facing the working class from day to day.

The trade unionist hears on the wireless, reads in papers, hears talks in pubs, on these vital questions—the questions most interesting to him—but there's nowhere he can go to discuss them. The Labour Party is becoming a dangerously empty bureaucracy, carrying on discussions over the heads of its members.

How does Mr. Hicks answer this conundrum ? A miner joins the Labour Party. His own divisional labour party appoints a delegate to the Labour Party's Conference. He helps to decide what the delegate shall do and how he shall vote. The delegate returns home to say his vote has been cancelled out by Ebby Edwards, his own General Secretary, using the miners' block vote on the opposite side. That's the situation to which the earnest rank-and-filer is at present reduced.

The word " recruit " is a good one, an excellent one. It means a moron recruited into an army, and ready to obey the orders of generals.

It seems to me that two lessons are to be learned from the present position of the Labour Party.

(1). That the electorate of the country have not so much given a vote of confidence in the capitalist parties as a vote of no confidence in the working-class parties. The Labour Party has not rid itself of the consequences of the 1931 débacle. An active re-alignment of working-class forces is required if the memory of 1931 is to be wiped out, and the confidence of the working class reanimated. How is this to be accomplished ? Only by presenting to the country a new combination of forces. The Labour Party itself can't do it. It must receive a transfusion of blood. There is nowhere from which this can be obtained except by an understanding and an alliance with the Communists and the I.L.P. It is no use arguing that these two bodies are so numerically

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small that they don't count. Numbers are of little importance in this connection. The Communist Party is a party which by its record and by the accident of circumstances is not besmirched with the consequences of premature governmental responsibility. The Labour Party has everything to gain and nothing to lose by the closest association with them. The assimilation of the I.L.P. and the Communist Party *into* the Labour Party would be futile. It is the alliance which is of importance, not the assimilation. An alliance would be a new point of departure. Assimilation would still leave the Labour Party encumbered by the bad tradition it has accumulated in recent years. Provided that the Labour Party could agree to an alliance with the Communist Party and the I.L.P. it could make temporary arrangements with the Left fragments of the old Liberal Party without danger. There is a suggestion now being made that the Labour Party should make an arrangement with the Liberals without making any similar arrangement with the Communist Party and the I.L.P. That would be disastrous. It would merely convert the Labour Party into a left centre party which would be bound to repeat the tragic history of the German Social Democratic Party. It would lead not to a reinvigoration of the working-class movement, but to a temporary reinvigoration of the Liberals. While on the other hand a combination that stretched from the Liberals through the Labour Party to the Communist Party and the I.L.P. would still leave the Liberals as hostages of the Left.

Such an alliance could be accomplished only on the basis of the most meticulous and exact formulation of programmes. Theoretical considerations should be thrust into the background. The British people are an empirical people, usually with sentiments masquerading in the guise of abstract principles. It would be a mistake to give to this new alignment of forces any philosophical formula. Its justification would be found in the circumstances which had caused it to come about. Its defence in the objects that it sets itself. Personally I do not regard the association of the Left Liberals as absolutely essential to the alignment, but I can appreciate the fact that there would be some leaders in the Labour Party who would be prepared to take in the Communist Party on the Left if they could balance themselves by taking in the Liberals on the Right. I don't know if the Liberals would be willing to take part in such an alliance, but a trial might at least be made.

There is no need for the working-class movement of Great Britain to mark time till Fascism frightens them into taking action. Fascist strength can never occur in Britain if we take the right line *now*. The time lag is on our side.

(2). It is beginning to be realised, more and more in this country that the danger of war comes from just those countries which have permitted their

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working-class organisations to be destroyed. The suppression of the workers means the emergence of the threat of war. Under the ægis of this slogan many enlightened Liberals can be gathered into a Left combination. The economic success of Russia brings with it reassurances of the most gratifying kind to those members of British society, who regard themselves as possessing a predominantly constructive intelligence. In addition to all this the success of the *Front Populaire* in Spain and in France must make a move of this kind much easier in Great Britain. There will be no need slavishly to imitate what our Continental comrades have done. But what they have done at least points the way to the direction in which we ourselves must go even if the means we adopt are more suited to the British political scene.

I make these observations in the hope that they will stimulate discussion from which the working-class movement of Great Britain may emerge united and with a clear sense of direction.

II.

By RICHARD LEE

(*Late Labour Candidate for West Wolverhampton*).

I OPPOSED the exclusion of the Communists from the Labour Party on the ground that they were, on fundamental issues of principle and policy at one with the Labour Party.

For many years the declared aim of the Labour Party has been the abolition of the entire Capitalist system and the establishment of a Socialist Commonwealth. There are prominent leaders of the Labour Party who formally subscribe to this aim but in reality do not believe in Socialism as an immediate practical policy. There are others who believed in and carried out a foreign policy identical with that of the Tory Imperialist party and in absolute conflict with Socialist principles and policies.

My argument was not entirely logical. It was that if the Labour Party was broad enough to include those moderate Whigs and trimming opportunists of the right, it should also include the radical uncompromising Communists of the left. The strictly logical position would be to exclude both groups who are not realist supporters of the party policy. The question of party policy in reference to the Communists and the I.L.P. should, however, be considered in view of the present situation.

The disunity of the Labour Forces was the main cause of the disastrous result of the last election. When all explanations and allowances have been made, the electoral map of November, 1935, is appalling. Apart from the patches in the South with hundreds of miles and not one Socialist member, you have great industrial cities by the score, North, South, East and West, returning Tory Anti-Socialists.

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When you consider the ruinous condition of Europe, the danger of war, the areas in Britain stricken to death by unemployment, it is more than strange that a Government mainly responsible for engineering this catastrophe should win an election by an overwhelming majority. Those who suffered most from four years of Tory Imperialism helped to swell the Tory majority.

The main reason of the Labour failure was that their policy was not grasped by the vast mass of the electorate.

On Foreign affairs, the Brighton Labour Conference was persuaded that Baldwin and Sir Samuel Hoare had been converted to a Labour standpoint on the Abyssinian question. Speaker after speaker stated this from the packed platform. In fact the Brighton Conference was for the most part a plea for a National Government to carry out Imperialist sanctions against Italy.

In regard to domestic policy, the case was nearly as bad. The electorate do not want to know the detailed explanations of Labour policy. They want to know the immediate effects of Socialist policy on their economic conditions.

The problem of Labour is to frame a policy which will give immediate benefit to the mass of the people and pave the way towards radical Socialism.

The first condition of such a policy is a drastic change in our foreign policy. An economic collaboration with Soviet Russia would help us to solve our home problems more than any other step. Ameliorative measures for the unemployed and the ill-paid workers are only possible by capturing for the community some of the great profit-making concerns which are now the keystones of the capitalist structure.

What bearing has this programme of immediate policy on the problem of Labour Unity? I can only sketch in a sentence or two what would be the effects of Labour promulgating such a programme:

(1) Communists and genuine left-wing Socialists could have no scruples in joining the Labour Party and working for some definite objective. Even the most extreme Marxists have always recognised that an interim policy is of vital importance, and Russia's experience confirms this.

Even if you put only two items on your immediate programme:

(*a*) Work or Maintenance,

(*b*) A Socialist Policy in league with Soviet Russia,

that would be better than the unwieldy abstract essays which the Labour Party has thrown at the workers.

(2) The great point of conflict between Labour and Communism is on a contingent issue, the use of violence in resisting capitalist domination. The working for, and the execution of, a drastic interim policy is the only way of averting the above contingency. The attempt to do more than is possible would give Fascism its chance in this country. Why should

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we separate our forces as to some contingency which may never arise, and will not arise, if a united resolute policy be adopted.

(3) There is great need for Communists with their energy and enthusiasm to bring home our policy to the electorate. Propaganda in many quarters that I know has been of negligible value between elections. It has not reached five per cent. of the working class. This has been partly due to the fact that our policy has been too spread-eagled and vague. But it has also been due to the fact that open-air propaganda has been given up and nothing effective put in its place. The "Victory for Socialism" campaign was well-meant, but it did not strike home.

I am not persuaded that the open-air campaign which built up the Labour Party will not be needed to revive its influence and power.

But whatever the methods a more virile and aggressive propaganda is needed both among the working classes and the middle classes. We have to face an electorate, three-fourths of whom do not know the case for Socialism. Instead of using our energy in futile co-operation with League of Nations Liberals and Council of Action Lloyd Georgeites, and even Young Imperialists, let Socialists unite in a Leninist policy of giving the workers a big slice of economic freedom as a means to Socialist emancipation.

III.

By A. E. TURPIN

(N.E. Bethnal Green Labour Party and Member of Bethnal Green Borough Council.)

THE cry for Unity has been agitating the minds of the rank and file for a time now—and although the requests have repeatedly come from the Communist Party, no one can ignore the fact that the proposals are being viewed with sympathy by all sections of the Labour and Trade Union Movement. As a matter of fact, in all parts of the country wherever a meeting is held against War or Fascism, one can see perfect examples of united representation. A few years ago a member of the Labour Party speaking on a Communist Party platform would have had to have an excuse ready for the "calling over the coals," which would have been inevitable. Nor does the expression of willingness to co-operate end with the rank and file. Sir Stafford Cripps with the Socialist League have moved in the right direction. Veteran trade unionists like Mr. John Bromley have made stirring speeches on united platforms—and the finest article on the plea for Unity came from the pages of *Reynolds* by Hamilton Fyfe.

The first question is—why Unity? As a Labour man I think the arguments of some Labour people petty and lacking in foresight. The lesson of the Continent cannot be taken lightly. In the countries where the Socialist and Communist bodies failed to unite came defeat and

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humiliation. France and Spain taking the lesson to heart formed United or People's Fronts with the result that the forces which were thrown into confusion and broken were the Fascist forces. Not only were our comrades in Spain and France able to meet the threat of force and win, but what is more to the point and more significant, they were able to go to the elections and establish sweeping and unthought-of victories.

Most Labour people who do not favour the affiliation of the C.P. to the L.P. have one particular bee in their bonnets. I mean the one—that the C.P. is out for violent upheaval in contrast to themselves, who think they can get Socialism by constitutional methods. We must now realise that Fascism is but Capitalism with the gloves off and the knuckle-dusters on. We have seen it coming. The hour when capitalism begins to rock on its foundations has always been voted, also the danger hour for the anti-capitalist. It is just at this period that the boss class will deal their most brutal blows at the workers and use their most subtle propaganda to outwit us. The Nazis of Germany did not flinch from burning down the Reichstag when it was a matter of framing the C.P. of Germany, and they didn't hesitate when they had the Socialists and Trade Unionists within their power to subject them to the most fiendish treatment. So it is common sense to prepare for eventualities. There may be trouble on the streets, but it will not be the C.P. who will cause it, they will have to defend themselves. Will the force directed against the C.P. also be used to destroy the L.P. ? Yes, decidedly. Then in the name of common sense we must unite to defend our mutual interests.

The viewpoint that the L.P. without a militant Left Wing is becoming stagnant I believe to be true ; indeed not merely stagnant, but unsocialist. Principles which are the basic principles are being deliberately thrown aside in the face of the slightest opposition. The case of the Jubilee was tragic. The lick-spittle references to royalty by the *Herald* and some labour bosses show very clearly that if the L.P. is to be kept on an even keel and is not to turn turtle, then we must have a Left Wing to establish balance.

On the industrial front it seems that the T.U.C. have abandoned the strike weapon, for there is a continual stream of unofficial strikes where the workers spontaneously and with enthusiasm come on to the streets for action. Yet the official blessing and the leadership is always lacking.

These criticisms of my own Party may seem severe. Some people may say : Why stay ? I do so because I believe the L.P. to be the Party of the masses—at present at least—and although I try to be 100 per cent. militant, I agree with that maxim of Napoleon which runs : An army marches at the rate of its *slowest* regiment. So we in the L.P. who are more advanced, feel it our duty to stay with the slowest marchers.

The trend in world affairs is amalgamation—in Trade Union, Politics, and in International Defence. If it is logic to base defence on the strength

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of combined nations, such as is intended to be the true working of the League of Nations, why not a League of Socialist Bodies, each keeping its own autonomy, but behaving like regiments forming an army, each having its *esprit-de-corps*, but being a portion of one body that will weld itself together at the moment of danger ?

At the moment of writing comrades in every section of the movement are falling over themselves to make sure the 80th Birthday Celebrations given on behalf of Tom Mann will be a success. How can we all praise this fine old rebel and revel in his sincere and fine philosophy—and yet stand on one side while he begs us to settle the United Front question without delay. It does seem to be a fine example of humbug. Don't let us give Tom lip service.

Let us take the lesson of 1914 and Keir Hardie to heart when the comrades in the international and national Socialist Movements forgot their principles. Hardie died broken hearted. Don't let us treat Tom the same way. The circumstances are the same.

"I see a fine chance here in this country for a United Front of all progressive forces," says Tom Mann, and who will say that this comrade with his wealth of experience is talking without knowledge.

If we forget Tom Mann for the moment and think of Harry Pollitt, Willie Gallacher, J. R. Campbell, etc., etc. Even were it true that the L.P. could look after itself, the C.P. couldn't. Who would have the audacity to think that we in the L.P., T.U. and Co-operative Movements would stand by and watch our old comrades subjected to Fascist bullyings ? No ! Fundamentally we belong to the same faith ; our enemies are the same, our objective the same, labels can be re-written according to circumstances.

So now is the time to begin action based on that fine old slogan : Working Men of all Lands Unite ! France and Spain have begun the line that is to stretch around the world. Let it be to the honour of the Workers of Britain to build the next section of this wall that will be in effect the United Front of the World's Workers.

IV.

By G. D. MILLER

(*Late Chairman, Oxford University Labour Club*).

TO the majority of thinking and active socialists in Oxford University to-day two things are apparent: first, that the Labour Party is gravely unclear as to its future, and second, that the affiliation of the Communist Party would do much in resolving this unclarity.

What is the present internal position of the Labour Party ? The leadership, having re-established its grip after the 1931 crisis, is well

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content with the results of the last General Election ; and it is now concerned only with preserving the unity of all English Parliamentary parties (*e.g.*, on the broader aspects of the Monarchy and Foreign policy), and with " showing the country that we can govern " by demonstrating the incompetence, as opposed to the class-basis, of the Government. Inside the Party and the Trade Union Movement itself, there are signs of stirring and attempts to throw off the lethargy of the 1931-5 period, the years of programme-making and little else. The causes are many, but of them the most important are the disquiet caused by the General Election results, and the opportunities of improved standards offered to a determined Trade Union Movement by the improved economic situation. Yet politically the Left Wing in the Labour Party is insignificant, owing to the division and confusion caused by the supine attitude of the Executive towards the policy of the Government in the Italo-Abyssinian dispute. On the other hand, Oxford socialists see outside the Party a Communist Party which fully recognises the gigantic nature of the fight before us, sees the need for a more vigorous Trade Union Movement and an independent policy in international affairs, for action in and outside Parliament which will modify and finally sweep away the present Government, replacing it by a Labour Government which will not spend its time in preparing great paper schemes of " nationalisation " (which will benefit the employing as much as the working class), but will strengthen the power of all those who are opposed to the economic system of to-day.

In such circumstances there can be no hesitation on our part in supporting the request of the Communist Party for affiliation. What, then, is the reason for the stubborn refusal even to take part in a joint discussion of the matter ? Partly no doubt, personal bitterness (for which the leaders of the Labour Party are by no means wholly to blame) ; but far more, adherence to a political theory which was widely held in the Second International but did not save many of its parties from destruction. Comprising this theory of political action there is first a belief in the steady increase of the socialist vote as organisation improves and the " truth " becomes manifest ; second, the belief that the truth becomes so manifest that all parties are compelled to adopt the socialist platform of public ownership ; and last and most important, the belief that dictatorship of the " Right " is only an answer by the middle classes to a threatened dictatorship of the " Left." With all these beliefs, we are in profound disagreement. The history of the International Labour Movement since the Great War does not show a steady and sustained increase of votes ; on the contrary, it shows at best stabilisation at about 40 per cent. of the electorate, enough to give coalition or minority governments and no more until Fascism annihilates the working-class movement. Secondly, because the Conservative Party passes the London Passenger Transport Bill with few changes, or considers public control of mining royalties or

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agricultural tithes, it does not follow that socialism has won over the Tory Party ; the State may own and control many branches of economic enterprise, but for us the only question of any relevance is, who owns and controls the State ? Last, the " Dictatorship versus Democracy " theory ; translated into English politics, the argument after pointing out the hatred of many potential labour voters for anti-democratic, anti-monarchical and anti-religious parties or politicians, maintains that this support will be lost, and the reactionary tendencies in the Conservative Party will be greatly strengthened if the Labour Movement establishes any contact with the Communist Party. Even if we make no attempt to estimate the number of Labour Party members who would view the present constitutional system in a different light, if it became a shield for the strengthening of reaction instead of being a barrier to reaction as it is in the present phase, the lines of our reply are clear. The middle class has no fixed and perennial political alignments, and a clear, determined and practical lead from the working class can carry many members of that class a long way on the road to socialism. If the working class movement plays safe, and that lead is not forthcoming, the middle class will follow the political party that seems likely to achieve power. To particularise, the united working class movements of France and Spain have been able to offer a concrete, anti-capitalist short term policy which has been accepted by the Liberal and Centre Parties ; the great social-democratic party of Germany refused working-class unity but retained neither its own working-class strength not its middle-class support. For it was not the imminent danger of a Left Dictatorship that brought Fascism in Germany ; the middle-class wanted a lead against the chaotic economic system, the capitalist wanted the destruction of working-class trade union and political power, and the Nazi Party offered both.

Here the objection is raised that the united front has been successful where there has been an imminent danger of Fascism, that this does not exist in Britain to-day and that therefore our argument is invalid. But it is clear that the People's Fronts of France and Spain are based not only on the Fascist danger, but also on economic demands and changes in foreign policy. In England the power of reaction is becoming stronger, the economic demands of the majority of the population are becoming more pressing, and will increase with any slackening of recovery ; furthermore, the policy of the National Government in foreign affairs is so dangerous, and the potential rôle of this country so great in this sphere here alone, that unity and clarity is indispensable.

Briefly to sum up : a united movement need have no fear of losing middle-class support if a clear and determined line is advanced ; while the achievement of such a policy will be gravely retarded if the struggle for unity is unsuccessful.

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V.

By B. J. CHAPLIN

(*Newport Labour League of Youth*).

IN this age of crises, diplomatic blunders, revolts and *coups d'états*, even those of us who have equipped ourselves sufficiently enough to be able to analyse clearly and concisely the issues with which we are confronted are apt to overlook occasionally significant happenings which eventually lead to disunity and controversy within the Labour Movement itself. A typical example might be the attitude of the Labour Party towards its youth section which has culminated in the Labour League of Youth's open revolt against the dictatorship of the reactionaries.

In order to appreciate fully the importance of this challenge to bureaucracy one must understand the growth and progress made in the Youth Movement since its inception a few years ago right up to the Annual Conference held recently, and one would then realise the truth in my declaration some two years back that it had never been the intention of the National Executive to allow the League of Youth to become a real political force.

At the commencement members were merely young people steeped in the vague generalities of Socialist philosophy and destined to accept the policy of their elders, but to-day a great change has taken place for the League is now rapidly developing into an organisation of Left-thinkers who, acting within the constitution of the Party, offer an analytical criticism of Party policy. Hence the reason for the statement made by the Sowerby Bridge delegate, who said :—

> I am sympathetic with the desire of the Executive to root from the movement the Communist tendencies. Communists have failed to permeate the larger movement and are now trying to get in through the Youth Movement.

The National Executive recognises this swing to the Left, and its fear is expressed in several passages of the memorandum that it placed before the Conference. Here is one outstanding passage :—

> There is clear evidence that for some time the idea has been fostered that the League of Youth should be a " Youth Movement." In some cases it is felt that it should be independent of the control of the Party, and in other cases, while remaining a part of the Party, it should be free to register opinion, hostile or otherwise upon the considered policy of the Party, at its local and national conferences.

In order to counteract this ever-growing desire to criticise the Executive appeals to the democratic principles of the members of the League by stating, in another paragraph, that " they are entitled to attend meetings of the Party as other individual members do, and take their part in framing Party policy. To ask for powers to deal with Party policy at League

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Conferences is to ask for a dual opportunity for expression of opinion which is not enjoyed by other individual members."

Youth's desire to discuss Party policy at its own conferences has arisen out of the fact that right throughout the country League branches are finding their local parties unsympathetic and, in the words of the South Tottenham delegate, "the Labour Party is stifling the initiative of its young members." Even so, the argument put forward by the National Executive is totally illogical for the Party policy is determined in the main by the bloc votes wielded by trade union leaders, whilst the trade unions have already expressed their opinions through their local constituency and divisional parties.

The crux of the whole situation lies in the lack of tolerance shown by the Lib.-Lab. element in the Labour Movement towards the scientific thought of the new generation, and this can lead only to one thing—an attempt to crush this new line of thought.

As an immediate step towards this end the National Executive proposes taking away all those who are over twenty-one—that is, those who are likely to be most politically advanced, with the result that the membership of the League will, at all times, be sufficiently politically immature to be moulded along "gradualist" lines when finally deposited among the sages.

Should these proposals be carried out one thing at least is certain—the exiles will turn to the Socialist League and this Left-wing movement, augmented by a large body of class-conscious young Socialists, will see to it that the National Executive's victimisation of the Youth Section will react with a boomerang effect upon Transport House.

There is, however, plenty of time before the Annual Conference for the Executive to review the situation and come to some arrangement that would be of help both to the Party and the League, but if, despite the vehement protests of League branches, it goes through with its proposals then well may we ask "Whither Labour Youth?"

[Previous contributions by *David Freeman* (late Labour Candidate for Portsmouth, C.), *R. F. St. J. Reade* (Westbury), *E. Shearer* (Aylesbury), and *Professor G. E. G. Catlin* (Sunderland), will be found in the February issue; *Prof. Harold J. Laski, John Lewis* (Great Yarmouth), *W. H. Bennett* (Dover), and *D. W. Flanagan* (Editor "Rotherhithe Labour News"), in the March issue; *R. McKinnon Wood* (Harborough), *T. D. Smith* (Member, first E.C. of N.C.L.C.), *John Morris* (Gen. Secretary, University Labour Federation), and *Leonard Wells* in the April issue; *George Hicks, M.P.*, in the May issue. A copy of each of these issues can be obtained from The LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, London, W.C.1, for 7d. post free.]

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PROBLEMS OF TRADE UNIONISM IN 1936

[*The following contributions are in continuation of the discussion which the* LABOUR MONTHLY *opened last month with an article by Arthur Horner, of the South Wales Miners' Federation on Trade Union Policy. The year* 1936 *sees the unions growing rapidly, but there is a lack of a progressive policy. How is this to be overcome? We invite our readers to contribute their views.*]

I.

Rationalisation Problems

By J. R. CAMPBELL

ARTHUR HORNER'S article on "Problems of Trade Unionism" did a service in raising some of the new questions which the trade union Movement is called to face.

A careful examination will reveal that those problems are closely connected with the intensive process of technical rationalisation going on in British industry to-day.

Three important unions—the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Tailors and Garment Workers' Union, and the Amalgamated Engineering Union—have issued warnings against "unofficial strikes." In pre-war days such strikes were usually attributed to Syndicalist influence. In the immediate post-war period it was the influence of the "British Bolsheviks." Now it is the Communist who is "the cause of all the trouble, the cause of all the crime." The difference, however, is this. In the two previous periods it was left to the capitalist press to talk about the spontaneous strikes as being due to Syndicalism and Bolshevism. Such interpretations were generally scouted by even the Right Wing trade union leaders. To-day the latter are not above lending evidence to the theory that the Communists are the cause of all unofficial strikes. A more effective examination of the position will show that many of those strikes are due to the failure of the present trade union machinery to adequately deal with the problems raised by the intensive rationalisation of industry.

What are the Problems?

Closely connected with the new rationalisation drive is the persistence of great mass unemployment in spite of the fact that the output of British industry has now attained the highest point in its history. The problem of mass dismissals, the problem of industrial transference, require to be faced in this connection.

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Then there is the whole question of safety—raised sharply by recent disasters in the mining and the shipping industries. There can be no doubt that the safety regulations, framed in an age, where the god of speed played a somewhat lesser rôle than it does to-day, cannot offer any effective protection to the workers at the present moment.

Last, but not least, the question of the Youth. Rationalisation involves the increase of semi-skilled machine minding. Many of the jobs formerly done by skilled labour have been steadily sub-divided and simplified until they can be done by youths. What more profitable for the employer, than to give those jobs to youths between the ages of 18 and 21, on the basis of youth wages. And when the youth becomes a man, what is easier than to dismiss him and take on another youth in his place.

Such are some of the problems connected with the rapid rationalisation of industry.

Some Effects of Rationalisation

It should be explained that British industry is at the present moment making a terrific effort to catch up with its hitherto more efficient competitors—the industries of the U.S.A. and Germany. Whereas in these countries a terrific process of technical rationalisation was carried out before the outbreak of the economic crisis in 1929, this was not the case in Britain. Since the beginning of 1932, however, the rationalisation drive in Great Britain has been carried forward with unexampled energy.

Two examples from heavy industry. In 1929 only 28 per cent. of the coal raised was cut by machines. In 1934, 47 per cent. was so cut. in 1929, 14 per cent. of the coal raised was mechanically conveyed, and in 1934, 37 per cent. Hence the increased output with the decreased number of workers employed mentioned by Comrade Horner in his article.

A similar state of affairs is disclosed in the crude steel industry. In 1929 the output in this industry was 9,636,200 tons. The insured workers were 178,720 and the percentage of unemployed was 19.9. In 1935 the number of insured workers had fallen to 161,870, the unemployed percentage had risen to 22 per cent. and the output had increased to 9,842,400 tons. Ten per cent. less workers and a greater output.

Mondism and Rationalisation

Now it will not be denied that the official trade union movement foresaw the coming of the rationalisation drive away back in 1927 and proposed a policy in relation to it—the policy known as Mondism.

Those active workers in the trade union movement who have a copy of the Trades Union Congress reports from 1927 to 1930 will find therein the principal trade union leaders arguing for this policy. It was described as a wonderful new policy which avoided the twin evils of sectional struggle and revolutionary trade unionism—a new policy that was guaranteed to protect the workers from the worst evils of rationalisation.

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It was argued that the problem of rationalisation could not be tackled in a piecemeal fashion, but should be tackled by the representatives of the employers organised in the Confederation of Employers' Organisations and the Federation of British Industries on the one hand and the Trades Union Congress on the other.

The general ideas of Mondism were that the unions should co-operate with the employers in rationalising industry ; that rationalisation would make industry more prosperous and that if the workers had joint arrangements with the employers for promoting rationalisation, then they could safeguard the workers from the evil effects of rationalisation and claim a share in the resulting prosperity.

The whole policy can best be summed up in two quotations from the report of the General Council to the 1928 Trades Union Congress.

> " The ultimate policy of the movement can find more use for an efficient industry than for a derelict one, and the unions can use their power to promote and guide the scientific reorganisation of industry as well as to obtain material advantages from that reorganisation."
>
> " That policy affords the best hope of raising the status, security and standard of living of the workers whom the Council represents."

In pursuance of this line the Trades Union Congress went into conference with a group of prominent employers headed by the late Sir Alfred Mond (Lord Melchett). This led to an official conference representing the Trades Union Congress General Council and the Confederation of Employers' Organisations and the Federation of British Industries, which elected a sub-committee of the three bodies mentioned. The Trades Union Congress General Council had received recognition from the bodies representing the employers as a whole. It was at last in a position to consider the problems of British industry as a whole.

Alas, for the hopes of the T.U.C., that capitalist rationalisation would create a prosperous industry. The capitalist system was moving towards an economic crisis, which the intensive rationalisation taking place in most countries only intensified. As the crisis deepened the employers passed from industrial peace to industrial war, and the policy of " wages must come down " was ruthlessly applied in the main industries.

The sub-committee of the T.U.C. and the main employers' organisations was liquidated by the latter and the employers' federations in the individual industries went gaily ahead with speed-up and wage cuts. The great new policy hammered out at two successive Trades Union Congresses was proved to be the most pitiful nonsense. It did for a time give the bosses a free hand with their rationalisation schemes, but it did not protect a single worker from the consequence of capitalist rationalisation for profit.

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Yet the naïve belief remains that capitalist rationalisation is in some way advantageous to the working class. Mr. Joseph Jones, President of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, has a hard post on the Coal Mines Reorganisation Commission. The main job of this Commission is to promote amalgamations in the coal mining industry. This, together with the restriction of output under another section of the Coal Mines Act, means, if carried out, the mass dismissal of members of the organisation of which Mr. Jones is president, without Mr. Jones having an iota of power to protect these men.

The officials of the cotton trade unions have in the past tried to work up enthusiasm for a Cotton Control Board, which meant unemployment and mass dismissals in the cotton industry. Thus, while central discussions with the employers have long since been abandoned, the ideology of Mondism continues to determine the daily policy of the unions.

When the Mondist policy was being put through the Trades Union Congress in 1927-29, the Left argued that it was no business of the workers to co-operate with the employers in framing rationalisation schemes which, under a capitalist society, would only be put through by the employers on the basis of a greater output for lower wages ; that on the contrary the trade unions could best protect their members from the consequences of capitalist rationalisation by concentrating on the building up of their power, and using that power to protect their members from speed-up, mass dismissals, price-cutting, and all the other accompaniments of rationalisation.

Works Organisation as the First Remedy

It is clear that the first essential of this policy is for the unions to fight for greater power for their workshop representatives. Without this there can be no adequate protection for the workers, and all talk about defending their interests is delusive.

Take, for example, the situation in the metal industry. The employer desires, let us say, to introduce a new machine on which work formerly done by skilled men shall now become the prerogative of semi-skilled men, at a lower rate.

What powers of protection does the union at present possess ? According to the existing procedure for avoiding disputes the employers must give 10 days' notice of such a change. If the workers object to the contemplated change they can secure the opening of shop negotiations. If no agreement can be reached in these negotiations the employer has the power to enforce the change contemplated, pending the union taking the question to local or national conference. This means in effect that the workers under the existing agreement are forced to accept changes involving a worsening of conditions pending negotiations which may be dragged out a considerable time. Only when these negotiations have

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been exhausted has the union the right to strike. But this right to strike in the very nature of the case can only be directed against an accomplished fact and not against a projected change.

It is clear that in the metal industry, as elsewhere, the workers must fight for the principle that projected changes must be negotiated through all the stages first, and only then put into operation, with the workers free to strike against the change if they so desire. Without this right there can be no effective resistance against rationalisation. The workers in this industry must in self-defence not only insist on an alteration in the procedure for avoiding disputes which will give them this right, but must in the meantime exert this right wherever possible in the workshops.

Take the allied question of piece prices. The current agreements in the engineering industry guarantee the workers that piece-prices and bonus times shall be fixed at rates which enable a worker of average ability to earn 25 per cent. over the time rate. In many workshops during a depression this rule is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Workers in such cases may be doing piecework for earnings which are just a trifle above the time rate.

In these provisions there is absolutely no safeguard against excessive speeding up. Say, for example, the workers in a given plant, by going at a comfortable speed are earning 25 per cent. above time rates. The employers through the rate-fixers, desire to speed them up. The piece-prices are cut. The workers, however, are used to a certain standard of life. If they have no effective trade union protection, their tendency will be to try and make the same weekly earnings as before by speeding up until they almost reach breaking point. The employer has succeeded in drastically worsening working conditions—without in any way violating the letter of the agreement.

Piece-prices are usually fixed by the worker and the rate-fixer on the basis of " mutuality "—*i.e.*, individual negotiations. The unions have got to build up a strong workshop organisation and insist on the right of the shop stewards collectively to negotiate on all piece-prices and bonus times.

Many similar questions arise which are a matter for shop negotiations. The conveyor system is now in operation over a large stretch of industry. The speed of the worker is regulated by the speed of the conveyor. The workers must therefore insist on their right to negotiate with regard to the speed of the conveyor, and with regard to the regular introduction of rest pauses.

It is clear that all this demands that the unions fight for greater powers for their workshop representatives ; that they give them a measure of training and help in every way to strengthen factory organisation.

The Question of Legal Factory Councils

So important is it to have strong trade union defences in the workshop in the present period that the time has come for the unions to ask them-

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selves whether the powers of the unions in the workshop should not be strengthened by legal enactment.

In Austria and Germany before the Fascist counter-revolutions there was established a system of elected factory councils. The factory councils law in these countries was introduced in 1919 as a means of diverting the movement of the workers in a revolutionary situation. To that extent the law was reactionary. Nevertheless, to have in every factory a council elected by the ballot votes of the workers, a council on to which the most militant trade union shop stewards would have no difficulty in getting elected, would be of very great advantage to the British workers in their struggle against rationalisation. There are at the moment on the railways sectional councils which are elected under the Railways Act. There was a suggestion in 1920 for a system of elected pit committees in the mining industry. (As this was intended to be an alternative to the nationalisation of the mines, the miners very properly turned it down.) Now a number of Government mines inspectors have suggested to the Royal Commission on Safety in Mines the election of safety committees at the pits. Care would have to be taken, however, in the event of the movement supporting legal factory councils, not to tie up those councils with an elaborate network of procedure, which would prevent them taking action in co-operation with the unions on behalf of the workers.

A Collective Policy needed to resist Rationalisation

In addition to strengthening the defences of the workers in the factories, the whole question of the workers' resistance to rationalisation requires to be thought out by the movement.

Comrade Horner rightly says "There is a feeling that rationalisation cannot be resisted." This is true and this feeling is leading to the breaking down of standards everywhere.

Take an example from the mining industry. There is, we have seen, a rapid development of machine mining and of the conveyor system, leading in most coalfields to heavy mass dismissals. When machine cutting is introduced there is frequently a sharp cut in piece-prices. The union frequently confines itself to negotiating a new price list that will give the hewers approximately the same daily earnings as was the case before the introduction of machinery. That many men should be dismissed as a consequence of machine mining, that excessive overtime should be worked—well all this tends to be regarded as "inevitable under the capitalist system."

It is time that the workers set their faces against this fatalism. When there is a question of a colliery going over to machine mining a determined struggle should be put up which will adequately protect the workers from (1) mass dismissals, (2) price-cutting and speed-up, and which will ensure (3) higher day rates for those on the machines, and (4) the elimination

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of systematic overtime which at present amounts to nothing more nor less than a flagrant evasion of the 7½-hours day provisions of the Coal Mines Act.

Associated with this is the question of the transference of industry. Some months ago the great tinplate firm of Richard Thomas in West Wales had to be restrained with difficulty from transferring a large part of its enterprise to Lincolnshire, leaving a large part of West Wales derelict. It is clear that the only consideration for a firm making such a transfer is that it would lead to greater profits for the firm. It is clear that what may be a gain to a particular firm, may be a loss to the community, for around the industry that is about to be transferred, a community has developed and expenditure incurred in developing various social services. Shopkeepers have invested their savings in the district and stand to lose a great deal if the industry is transferred elsewhere. Their loss must be weighed against the company's gain.

It is clear that the trade union movement is justified in rousing the whole population to oppose such transfers. There is obviously a case for the regulation of the transference of industry by the State in order to prevent the wanton creation of new derelict areas in this country.

A Shorter Working Week

But the paramount question that is being raised by industrial speed-up is the question of the hours of labour. It is clear that a reduction is necessary: (1) in order to reduce the hard core of unemployment. At the highest peak which British industry has yet reached we have still almost two million unemployed. (2) To offset the speed-up and strain of modern industry, and (3) to guarantee the workers' safety and ensure them greater leisure.

At the very depths of the crisis in 1932 the trade unions were conducting a vigorous propaganda for the forty-hours' week. But as the crisis diminished and the industrial strength of the unions grew the forty-hour propaganda was shelved. None of the big unions have put forward the shorter working week in making their claims upon the employers. Was the propaganda for the forty-hour week in 1932-33 merely an example of escapism—of the leaders seeking to get away from the hard reality of the crisis by indulging in a propaganda that did not call for immediate action? It may have been so on the part of the leaders, but the more thoughtful rank-and-filers realise that for the unions to refuse to make the shorter working week a matter of industrial negotiations is really to abandon altogether the effective defence of the workers against rationalisation.

The Unions must Speak for the Youth

If the rationalisation drive weighs heavily on the adult workers it weighs still more heavily on the youth, and calls for fresh thinking in

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the trade union movement. How many people outside the unions, for example, realise that in some of the largest industries of the country the employers absolutely refuse to conclude a collective agreement covering youth labour. This is the case in the engineering industry, for example. The excuse is that the youth are not employees in the ordinary sense of the term. They are apprentices and their contract is one between their parents and the employers. This excuse is simply humbug. The great majority of the youth are not apprentices in any accepted sense of the term. With the development of the machine tool, jobs formerly done by skilled men are being sub-divided and given to youth labour which is not protected by collective bargaining. It is clear that the unions in their own interests have got to claim the right to speak for youth in industry.

The greatest damage to industrial youth to-day is being done in the new industries, in light engineering and in certain luxury industries. Here youths between 18 and 21 are employed on various types of repetition work and receive no industrial training except that of managing a particular type of machine. At the age of 21 they are dismissed to make way for the newcomers. Years of their life have been spent in the service of capitalist profiteers, and they have received no industrial training of a useful character whatsoever. It is clear that trade union agreements covering the youth will have to include sections providing for adequate technical training for youth (in the employer's time and at the employer's expense), and abolishing the blind alley character of many of the present jobs.

Why not a Wage Increase and Union Recruitment Campaign?

Lastly there is the whole question of co-ordinating the mighty wage movement taking place in industry at the present time. Railwaymen, engineers, wool and cotton textile workers, road transport workers, clothing workers, are all putting forward demands for increased wages. How can the full weight of the union movement be put behind these demands.

If we examine all previous periods when the workers were successfully advancing claims for increased wages, we find that the claim for advance was accompanied by a powerful publicity campaign in which the main questions involved were hammered out in public. To-day, however, negotiations are conducted in an atmosphere of " hush hush " and secrecy. In fact, the railway unions in a recent agreement contracted not to engage in a propaganda campaign on behalf of a wage increase, when that increase has become the subject of negotiations. Yet in no industry could the force of the public be mobilised in support of the workers with greater ease than in the railway industry.

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In the one industry where a wage application has been reinforced by a publicity campaign—the mining industry—the result was such as to justify the transference of this policy to the whole sphere of wage negotiations.

The drive should therefore be started for the Trades Union Congress to organise a Wage Increase and Trade Union Recruitment Campaign. In this campaign the facts about speed-up, neglect of safety, low wages, brutal exploitation of the youth could be publicly exposed and an impetus given to the recruitment of unorganised workers. For this campaign it is necessary for the whole of the speaking forces of the Labour Movement to be organised. Previous recruitment campaigns, where the star turns were elderly trade union officials, have not had the best results because the recruitment campaign was not linked up with the drive for increased wages and because the conduct of the campaign was of the most unimaginative character.

Such a campaign properly carried out could win great public support, set the masses of the workers in motion and prepare the way for that industrial pressure and action which is best calculated to produce results. This campaign could create such a feeling for unity, that any appeals for financial support for any body of workers on strike would meet with a powerful response.

On the basis of the atmosphere created by such a campaign, the great unions which are presenting wage demands, could arrange that their notices be handed in about the same time so that the maximum pressure be brought to bear on the employers.

Many officials are as yet blind to the great change in working-class outlook in recent months. They are still congratulating themselves on having come through the economic crisis with their unions intact. That is understandable, but not to use the present favourable situation to secure the maximum possible advance would be a colossal crime.

The fact that there should be this resistance to advance underlies the importance of Horner's point about grouping the progressive branches and shop stewards in the unions in a powerful movement which will work for a change in union policy. That, however, is the subject for someone else to tackle.

The essential fact that I would stress is that rationalisation is creating new problems for the workers ; that the Mondist policy for protecting the workers from the consequences of rationalisation has proved to be completely bankrupt and has in fact only facilitated the rationalisation drive at the expense of the workers, and that therefore a return to a resolute class struggle policy is called for. The suggestions contained in this article are a contribution to such a policy, the formulation of which is long overdue.

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II.

Lessons for the Printing Unions

By GORDON HICKS

(*Typographical Association, Branch Delegate to Manchester and Salford Trades Council*).

THE questions raised by Arthur Horner in last month's LABOUR MONTHLY are of such vital import that they should be discussed in every trade union branch, district committee, or executive office throughout the country. I am going to try to find the lessons to be learned by the printing unions, and especially that section of them connected with the Press.

Historically, the most important unions are the craft unions. Up to the beginning of the war these unions were "pure" craft organisations. However, since the rise of the "mass" newspaper, these unions have more and more tended to become industrial unions. True, they have a long way to go before reaching the stage of the miners or the engineers, but the ever-increasing rationalisation in the newspaper world has necessarily meant a more harmonious welding together of the different grades of workers and a consequent solidarity of those who have been thrown together and whose jobs are to a great extent interdependent. Thus we have seen the growth of the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, a body whose loosely-knit member organisations are becoming more and more closely welded because of common cause.

This industrialisation of newspapers has had its effects not only on the tradesmen's and unskilled workers' unions. The growth of the National Union of Journalists is a symptom of it. In comparison with the Institute of Journalists, a purely professional organisation, the union is a young body. But it is consciously developing the working journalist away from the "Professional" taint, and making him more and more conscious of the "class" character of his work. It is fighting the exploitation of the old "penny-a-liners," on whose sweated labour newspaper magnates waxed fat. It is associated with the other more advanced unions in the P. & K.T.F., and is helping its class brothers in the fight for better conditions in the industry.

One of the main obstacles, however, to the growth of unity in these unions is the parochial outlook of some of the smaller craft unions. When one realises that there are three separate and distinct unions operating in the Metropolitan Area alone on behalf of journeymen compositors, machinemen, and proof-readers, one cannot but come to the conclusion that these petty differences must be solved before any approach to a real industrial union can be made. They are, of course, linked together in the P. & K.T.F., but that is not sufficient. Their parish pump politics

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make it practically impossible for members of their organisations and members of the provincial Typographical Association (which, by the way, embraces *all* craftsmen in the industry) to seek jobs in their respective " territories." This, of course, is a position which should not be tolerated in an industry so important as the Press. When we have an ever-increasing encroachment by the big London dailies into the provinces, it is imperative that the workers should have one organisation which will cover both London and the provinces. The Federation is not sufficient for this purpose. It is too loosely knit. It is very necessary that work should be begun which will result in the welding together of these unions, and ultimately to the creation of one union which will cover the whole of the industry, viz., compositors, machine-men, journalists, process workers, book-binders, lithographers, and all the other multifarious tradesmen and unskilled workers who have separate organisations at present.

A further aspect of our difficulties in this year of struggle is one which is common to so many other unions. I refer to the agreements which the " Mondism " of Trade Unionism during the last decade has led us into. An analogy with the infamous " York Memorandum " of the A.E.U. is our system of Joint Industrial Councils. All our disputes are expected to be referred to these bodies before action is taken. When we consider that first of all the Executive Committee deals with it, then it is referred to the local J.I.C. and from them to the National J.I.C., it can readily be seen what time is wasted before any satisfactory settlement can be reached. The rank-and-file in the newspaper offices have got over this difficulty by using the weapon of withholding their overtime. As much of the production of the newspaper is done on overtime, this has proved valuable, but the embargoes have been entirely " unofficial." In connection with this, it is perhaps as well to mention the " Enabling " Bill which it is proposed to place before Parliament. This Bill is designed to make all agreements legally binding, and to set up a similar arbitration to that of the railwaymen. We have seen enough of these measures, which it is alleged would safeguard our interests to want to fight shy of it. Yet it is receiving the attention of our Executive Committees. Do we so easily forget the experiences of the miners in 1926 with a very similar measure, the Seven-hour-day Bill ?

There is a militant feeling amongst the rank and file of these unions. They are responding well to the wave of militancy which is sweeping the trade union world. But they are being held back by a few reactionaries who have not taken part in the everyday work of the rank and file ; who have not experienced the soul-breaking effects of rationalisation in the modern newspaper office ; and who are living in the mental period of Caxton and the handpress instead of the mass struggle of the industrialism of the 1936 Press Lords.

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THE DEMAND FOR COLONIES

By GORE GRAHAM

ANYONE with the slightest understanding of the present era of imperialism knows that one of its chief characteristics is that the unoccupied parts of the world have been partitioned out amongst the big imperial Powers ; that the result of this is an intensification of the struggle for colonies leading to wars for a repartitioning of the globe. What distinguishes modern imperialism from the old phase of capitalism is that a smooth evolution has given way to sporadic cataclysmic development ; the contradictions of capitalism have emerged with special force and the struggle for markets and for fields for investment, conducted in these conditions of extreme unevenness of development, have put periodical imperialist wars for the redistribution of the world and of spheres of influence on the order of the day.

To-day partly as a consequence of the spread of the ideals of international law and a League of Nations, there are people who, blind to the real implications of imperialism, superimpose upon its ugly realities abstract ideas of justice and fair play. People divide the imperialist rivals into the " Havenots " and the " Haves." From an unacquaintance with imperialist reality there arises a sympathy for the " havenots " and a desire to see them get fair play and equality. By ignoring the real character of capitalist economy, its motive forces, the present universal crisis which has been the inevitable result of its workings, such people are impressed by a plausible and moving picture of the unfairness of present balances.

Who the " dissatisfied " Powers are is well known—although with the world crisis, the enormously sharpened struggle for markets, etc., there is no capitalist state which can in anything but a relative sense be called a " satisfied " Power. Still, in a very definite sense, the three states, Germany, Japan and Italy, are the " havenots " who make clear to the world their " need " for and determination to achieve expansion, while the other states are relatively satisfied with the present territorial division of the world.[1]

The reasons for territorial expansion which these states give are the following: (1) The needs of prestige, of national *amour propre*. According to the spokesmen of the three countries concerned, great Powers such as they are cannot endure the disgrace of having no or very few foreign

[1]Poland, however, is now coming forward with a demand for colonies, although this is mainly a case of the smaller partner in the German-Polish rapprochement imitating the accents of the bigger. (*Times*, September 24, 1935. *Daily Telegraph*, 17.2.36.)

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possessions. Indeed, their prestige demands that they shall rule the world or at any rate a great part of it—and so on. There is no need to give here any of the innumerable illuminating quotations from Hitler, Mussolini or Japanese statesmen to illustrate this. (2) It is argued that these states need colonial possessions in order to find room for their surplus populations. (3) The demand for colonies is also based upon the need these states have for raw materials, which they cannot secure, it is said, so long as they are without colonies. In addition, it is stated that colonies would provide a market for the industries of the countries concerned and a field of investment for surplus capital.

The Surplus Population Problem

The case for the acquisition of colonies, based on the "population problem" survives very little examination. Japan has possessed Korea for forty years and has not settled as many of its people there during that time as would equal one year's increase of Japan's population. The German colonies never took as many German settlers as there were Germans living in Paris before the war (17,000) and, as a Nazi colonial advocate (Dr. Schnee) himself has stated, those of the former German colonies which were fertile were in general unhealthy and those which were healthy were infertile. Italy, after forty years' colonisation of Eritrea, has got to-day exactly 84 persons engaged there in agriculture, whilst whatever happens to Abyssinia it could never accommodate as settlers more than a small proportion of Italy's surplus population. If Italy planted settlers in Abyssinia as fast as she could for ten years, she would not have dealt with more than a two months' increase of the population of Italy. Sir Arthur Salter points out that, "if you take Central Tropical Africa, all the Europeans in all the colonies established in the course of more than a quarter-of-a-century, they do not amount to as much as the increase of Italian population in a year." The whole question of population pressure can only be used as an expansionist excuse by a genuine or feigned blindness to its real character.

There is no problem of population surplus except in relation to the social and economic conditions existing in a given country. With the exception of the Soviet Union every country has a surplus population; that is, more people than are properly fed, housed and given a chance of work, health and normal development. Britain has a surplus population of at least several millions if we count only the registered unemployed and their dependents—this, despite the possession of a big "Empire."

It does not need Marxists to recognise this fact about the population question, for to-day the writings of Sir Arthur Salter[2], Sir Norman Angell,

[2] "It is not emigration, it is not difficulties about raw materials, it is really a difficulty about markets which make populations surplus populations. There is no such thing as a surplus population anywhere in the world, except one that is relative to and caused by the existing commercial and economic system." (*Peace and the Colonial Problem*, p. 8.)

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and others have revealed how silly these appeals for the "havenots" based on population figures are. Czarist Russia used to export not only foodstuffs, but human beings; shoals of people driven by hunger emigrated from Russia every year. To-day, that same land, with a Soviet régime and a socialist economic system, has a shortage of human beings; because of the economic and social conditions prevailing its "population problem" is a problem of shortage, not glut. There is a good deal of talk about solving economic problems by an "open door" policy; but the Soviet Union has put an end to any surplus population difficulties by "opening the door at home."

The U.S.S.R., at present enjoying an annual increase in population of three-and-a-half millions, is confidently anticipating being able to feed new hundreds of millions of people in the coming decades! Hitler and his fellows make constant reference to the wide open spaces of the U.S.S.R., his scientists discover new proofs of the Aryan right to rule the whole of Siberia[3] and the Nazi youth sing a war song beginning "On to Russia, Soldier"; but the territory which is usually spoken of in connection with Nazi expansion eastwards is the Ukraine. Actually, however, this part of the U.S.S.R. has a greater density of population than Germany itself. Figures published last year by the Paris *Temps* reveal that in Germany the agricultural population numbers 42 per square kilometre, in Poland the number is 60 and in the Soviet Ukraine 63.

But it must not be forgotten that the Fascist states who wish to ease the way to expansion by plausible propaganda about population pressure, are deliberately forcing increases of their populations by a whole variety of means, thus showing a determination to achieve a place in the sun by sheer force of numbers.

The Raw Materials Problem

More important, however (by which is meant, less obviously the propaganda of expansionist aggression) are the arguments in connection with the economic demands particularly in relation to the acquisition of raw materials. In the demands for colonies made by the expansionist states themselves, the question of raw materials figures prominently. For example, Dr. Goebbels says: "Some countries are being suffocated by unused riches, whilst others perish in poverty . . . The basic materials of modern industrialism are coal, iron, cotton, oil, rubber and copper. How unequal is the distribution of these raw materials amongst the nations of the world." (March 3, 1936.) And Dr. Schnee says: "It is impossible to solve the raw material problem without giving

[3]One of the new "race scientists" of Germany, a Professor Ernst Horwitz, has "proved" that Germania once ruled over Siberia. Thus, writes the Professor, "Siberia must again become the centre, the fatherland of all *Germanen* . . . to Siberia, the land of gold, the treasure chamber of Europe, the eyes of all Germans are directed."

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Germany back her colonies. Germany will be satisfied with nothing less than the complete and unconditional return of all her former colonies." (April 26, 1936.)

Mussolini, too, declares that " there are nations which have everything and there are others which have nothing." (February 10, 1936.) On March 22 this year he stated : " Italy will not resign herself to the abused commonplace that she is poor in raw materials. It must be said that she does not possess certain raw materials. This is a fundamental reason for her colonial demands."

Such declarations as these, to which could be added like statements from Japanese spokesmen, are plain enough.

And now, what are the facts concerning raw materials or, at any rate, some of the facts, since in the short space of this article one cannot go into all detail.

A very useful collection of the information about present-day production of raw materials has just been published by the Institute of International Affairs.[4] When one reviews the production figures the first thing which stands out is the pre-eminence of the United States. Next comes the British Empire as a whole, that is, Great Britain, the colonial Empire, the Dominions and India, considered as a unit, although the Dominions, of course, are self-governing. The third place is taken by the U.S.S.R., the figures showing, naturally, the expected rapid advance. The U.S.S.R. is now (figures for 1934) the leading producer of half-a-dozen raw materials—flax, hemp, timber, manganese, magnesite and chrome ore—and the second producer of four others including petroleum. Next in importance, considered as composite units, come France and the Netherlands, with their colonial empires. True, the three states, Germany, Japan and Italy, together with scores of other states, are not big producers of raw materials.

The figures show, however, that Dr. Goebbels' " basic materials " *are produced to an overwhelming extent in Sovereign states.* Insofar as the British Empire is " self-sufficient," this is chiefly accounted for by production in the British Dominions and India. Rubber is, indeed, the only important raw material which is virtually a colonial monopoly : Malaya and the Netherlands East India.

Canada, with its virtual monopoly of the world's nickel ; China leading in production of soya beans ; Chile as the chief producer of copper ; South Africa providing half the world's gold ; Australia leading in wool and second in lead ; Spain first in mercury, pyrites and olive oil ; Mexico leading in silver, with large resources of lead, petroleum, etc. ; Venezuela's third position in petroleum ; all illustrate how the production of raw materials is in independent Sovereign states. The colonial territories of

[4] *Raw Materials and Colonies.* The Royal Institute of International Affairs. 2s. 6d.

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the various empires, though they yield a big variety of products, are really important producers of very few raw materials. What is more, the two quasi-monopolies mentioned (rubber and tin) are not possessed by colonial territories in Africa, around which continent the chief controversies centre and on which the eyes of expansionists are set. If the colonial raw materials be those materials of which the colonies and mandates produce at least 20 per cent. of the world's supply, the list, according to the material collected by the Institute of Foreign Affairs, would only include the following: "palm and palm kernel oil (99 per cent.—Nigeria, Netherlands East Indies, Belgian Congo); rubber (96 per cent.—British Malaya, Netherlands East Indies and Ceylon); copra (64 per cent.—Netherlands East Indies); tin (57 per cent.—British Malaya, Netherlands East Indies); phosphates (52 per cent.—Tunis, French Morocco, Algeria); graphite (46 per cent.—Korea, Ceylon, Madagascar); ground nuts (28 per cent.—French West Africa); copper—(21 per cent.—Northern Rhodesia, Belgian Congo); vanadium (South West Africa, Northern Rhodesia); and sisal (Tanganyika, Netherlands East Indies). If Southern Rhodesia were added, her chrome ore (9 per cent.) together with that of New Caledonia (12 per cent.) would qualify this product for inclusion in the list." Of these raw materials produced in all the world's colonial territories that are worth mentioning being 20 or more per cent. of world's production, there are only two of Goebbels' basic materials—rubber (96%) and copper (21%).

What is of striking significance is the fact that, apart from South West Africa's vanadium, Tanganyika's sisal, Nauru's phosphates (4.3 per cent.) and the Palestine potash deposits—(and let us remember that Germany is the world's chief producer of potash, which the Royal Institute's material, in its impartiality, does not point out in this connection)—which are now beginning to be developed, the Mandated territories at present are particularly poverty-stricken as regards discovered resources, which have been officially admitted, and have at present a negligible significance in the world supply of raw materials.

How ridiculous, therefore, when placed against the facts, are the assertions of the Nazis that "it is largely due to the loss of her colonies that Germany is so adversely affected by her present position in respect of foreign exchange and raw materials" and that "their return will materially contribute towards the restoration of economic prosperity." (Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1935.)

In 1911, according to the *Economist*, the imports of raw materials (excluding foodstuffs) of Germany from her colonies was £2.1 millions, compared with Germany's total imports of raw materials (excluding foodstuffs) of £270 millions! In 1913 sisal hemp was the only commodity imported into Germany from her colonies, which constituted more than 8 per cent. of the total value of the commodity so imported.

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The facts prove that any redistribution of colonies would have no appreciable effect on the raw material question as regards the expansionist states and that any support of colonial redistribution or of a return to Germany of her former colonies on the basis of beliefs in " economic justice " is a fatal mistake.

It is claimed that the dissatisfied countries must be allowed to possess colonies over which they have exclusive control because in the present world economic situation they have no other means of access to raw materials. Against this it is pointed out that there is actually a glut of raw materials, that no country in the world refuses to part with the raw materials it produces, the only condition being that these have to be paid for, whether bought from colonies or sovereign countries. To this the rejoinder is made that while of course there is really no other impediment to the acquisition of raw materials than that of paying for them, the dissatisfied countries, being debtors, cannot pay for the raw materials through lack of gold or foreign currency and through the inability or unwillingness of foreign countries to buy their goods. But these are questions belonging to the whole problem of world depression, to the paralysis of international trade which to-day is still only at 35 as compared with 31 in 1935, 100 representing the volume of trade before the crisis in 1929.

But to this it is replied that Germany (and Italy) would be in a position to secure the raw materials it needs, did it not deliberately maintain its currency at a higher rate of value than is warranted, and if it did not devote its whole economy to building up a war machine, alienate foreign buyers by its Jewish persecution, etc.

And what does this aim of owning, of having exclusive control over, colonial territories reveal ? It reveals no simple pre-occupation with present economic difficulties, but with the future needs of militarist expansion. The fascist leaders of the dissatisfied states think from morn to night of future wars of conquest, and their present colonial claims are bound up entirely with their crazy aims of world domination.[5] Even though it is pointed out that the possession of colonies will not help a country at war very much unless it is also able to control the seas, it is replied that, apart from other things, in the case of merely economic

[5] " There are eighty million Germans in Europe to-day. Our policy will be recognised as the correct one when in less than 100 years from now the continent of Europe is inhabited by 250,000,000 Germans." (Hitler, *Mein Kampf*.)

" Western Germany, the abode of the rejuvenation of the German spirit, is going to weld the weapons for that world historic leadership which the nations of the world are expecting of Germany to-day." (*Frankfuerter Zeitung*, December 10, 1933.)

" The question is . . . how can we create the *spirit* which renders a people capable of carrying arms ? When this spirit dominates a people, will power finds a thousand ways, each of which leads to a weapon." Hitler, *Mein Kampf*.)

" We are destined to rule the world."—Araki.

And so on, *ad infinitum*.

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sanctions, applied by the forces of collective security as has happened in connection with Italy, possession of colonies would be a great asset.

No, indeed ; no one interested in the preservation of world peace can give any support at all, direct or indirect, to the claims of the fascist expansionist states for a return or redistribution of colonial territories.

* * * *

It may be argued that this criticism of the colonial demands of the " dissatisfied " Powers, though it be well based on the needs of the fight for world peace, also in effect amounts to taking sides with the satisfied Powers who dominate their colonial peoples. Not at all. It involves no justification of the existing colonial domination. Those who are serious supporters of peace know quite well that the whole system of colonial empires is a fruitful source of war, that so long as colonial peoples are repressed and the colonial empires exist there can be no complete security against war. No serious peace-lover can have any other desire than that of seeing the abolition of colonial domination and the establishment of national independence throughout the present colonial territories.

Clearly then, no one who stands for peace can countenance any talk of redistribution of colonial areas since this means the acceptance of the whole conception of colonial territories and the peoples living in them as booty to be redivided amongst robbers. That is the prime fallacy of the Labour Party's present programme of equal opportunity for the Powers to enjoy exploitation of the colonial territories, the pooling of raw materials, and so on.

The way to meet the demand for equality with the " satisfied " Powers, made by the " have nots " is, as Mr. Leonard Barnes says in his pamphlet on the subject,[6] by endeavouring to make an end of all imperial domination, and certainly not by any sharing of its privileges.

It is because the struggle to remove imperial domination is not realised to be an integral part of any intelligent and effective fight against war that the various proposals put forward by Liberal and Labour spokesmen in England are no more helpful than open pleas for the return of the former German colonies, the " giving " of Abyssinia to Italy, and so on.

Mr. Lansbury and official Labour Party spokesmen to-day call for a world conference to discuss redistribution of raw materials, and for the placing of colonies under an international mandate. Sir Stafford Cripps, too, calls for " the pooling of colonial resources," whilst some Labour spokesmen, like Miss Wilkinson, even talk of a " rearrangement of the Mandates."

[6] *The Future of the Colonies.* Hogarth Press, 1s.

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Clear it is that the capacity for self-illusion amongst many well-meaning people is inexhaustible. Listening to Mr. Lansbury and others, it is seen that it is assumed there exists in the world conditions of universal justice, a reign of law and equity, it is assumed that the League is not what we know it to be, but a world league consisting of nations which have abandoned their national sovereignty for the common good, it is assumed that the Mandates system is something else than the mere cloak for colonial aggrandisement and domination that everyone knows it to be, it is assumed that there is a practical possibility of the big Powers relinquishing their privileges and pooling their resources, willingly allowing the colonial peoples to achieve independence. It is forgotten that to date there is no evidence that the Mandatory Powers will ever be persuaded to allow representatives of the colonial peoples to appear before the League Mandate commission. Likewise, it is forgotten that even the suggestion that the League Commission should have the right to send observers to see the Mandated areas on its behalf is stoutly resisted by the Mandatory Powers.

And in any case what is all this talk of the transference of mandates of colonies from the "haves" to the "have nots" but talk which in reality ignores the opinions of the inhabitants of these countries, treats them as chattel slaves to be bandied about at their masters' will, and above all, flies in the face of the principle of self determination, which is such a prominent feature of the ideals of League of Nations supporters. Is there any doubt that if the inhabitants of these countries were given the opportunity freely to decide, that they would vote for complete independence both from "have nots" as well as from the "haves"?

Mr. Lansbury's speech calling for a conference to discuss redistribution of world resources provoked jubilation in Germany, and fear and indignation in all the small states. These small states realise that peddling illusions weakens the forces of peace and strengthens those forces which, on the earth of reality not in the Heavens of idealist fancy, are right now threatening to destroy their independence. And it was not without significance that Mr. Lansbury's speech in the House was followed by one from Lloyd George, now playing the rôle of an international incendiarist, who referred not so much to pooling *British* resources, but to the "unfairness" of little countries like Portugal and Holland having colonial territories while a big land like Germany had none. No wonder that well known Conservative Swiss newspaper, the *Neue Zuericher Zeitung*, had some caustic remarks to make about Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy that was proposing to be very generous—at the expense of the small countries.

* * * *

A great number of people realise that all the economic arguments for colonial redistribution are completely fallacious, but say that nevertheless

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the case for the colonial demands of the dissatisfied Powers is not disposed of. The " have not " Powers are not persuaded. They have, in addition, their " psychological " arguments which, it is asserted, must be taken into account. To think that the question is disposed of because the economic arguments don't stand examination and to forget the " psychological " arguments of the dissatisfied Powers is, in the simile of the *Manchester Guardian*, " to adopt the attitude of those who refuse to believe a neurasthenic suffers because he has no bodily complaints."

Sure, let us take into account the " psychological " arguments. But what exactly is this psychological condition of the expansionist Powers ? It is simply the aggressive disposition of an imperialist fascist state which (in addition to being driven of course by its rotten condition internally) feels strong enough to demand, and fancies its chances of securing, a place in the sun. Why is it just Germany and Japan and Italy who are facing us with their arguments for a re-mapping of the world ? Certainly not simply because of their economic difficulties which every intelligent person knows would not be solved at all by any amount of re-mapping of the globe. But precisely because the ruling class of these countries feel that they have the power to *make* a place for themselves. They have that power for a variety of reasons ; strategic, economic, possession of man-power and of a military machine strong enough to allow them to contemplate the " continuation of policy " into war.

It is said that the " psychological " factor of the " have nots " can be met by the League taking over direct administration of mandated territories, and by the extension of the mandates system. By these means, it is said, the " have not " Powers would also be given an opportunity of taking part in " trusteeship " over the " backward " peoples, and that they would also have the satisfaction of seeing the apparent readiness of the " haves " to make concessions.

Certainly, we who want above all things to hold off war, have no desire to do the slightest disservice to peace by destructive, unhelpful criticism. But it really is necessary to castigate all current illusions such as these. To begin with, such a proposal flies in the face of the fact that the only attitude towards the question of the colonies that is consistent with a real fight for peace is one of support for the movement for national independence for the colonial peoples and an end, not a perpetuation in a new guise, of all imperial domination. Liberal and official Labour opinion, however, will not face up to that.

But putting that aside, is there the slightest chance of the colonies being detached from the rivalries of imperialist Powers and " put " (by whom ?) under international control and administered by an international civil service responsible to the League ? Is not such a proposal remote from any reality, is it not again assumed that something exists which is

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really as far away as the stars from the earth, a really super-state body, an ideal world League of Nations. Further, if it were realisable, and if Germany, Japan, and the United States were in the League, is there the slightest chance that the hungry imperialist " have nots," who are putting forward their claims because they feel strong enough to satisfy them by force, would be content with such a substitute for their explicit demand to have exclusive possession of colonies of their own ? Not a scrap. And yet, that proposal, long stated by Sir Arthur Salter himself to be quite impracticable, is described by the *Manchester Guardian* as " the most attractive of the various solutions."

The responsible leaders of the older imperialist Powers, the " haves," who are now on the defensive, are naturally desirous of finding some means of softening present antagonisms, and of preventing the attacks upon their positions which they rightly fear. That is why the British Government has declared its readiness to discuss the question of raw materials at an international conference ; that is why people like Sir Arthur Salter think that " it is extremely regrettable that at a time when British naval supremacy has gone and cannot be restored in its old form, our necessarily vulnerable empire should be made more vulnerable by the abandonment of one of our chief defences in the past," i.e., equal trading opportunities.

Whatever practical ameliorative proposals arise from such considerations would be supported by those anxious for peace. But there is no greater danger to be guarded against than illusions such as those at present chased by Liberal and Labour spokesmen with talk about the " psychology " of the expansionist states, and their oblivion to the fact that at present the only way to peace, or at any rate to the postponement of the outbreak of war, is by the firm unity of the forces of peace for certain collective action against aggression ; by the strengthening of peace to such an extent that the states who contemplate the satisfaction of their desires by war, will think again, knowing well beforehand that a stronger peace front will surely resist them.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STAKHANOV MOVEMENT

By E. WOOLLEY

THE significance of the Stakhanov movement, which has developed into a broad mass movement of Soviet workers and collective farmers lies " primarily in the fact that it is the expression of a new wave of Socialist competition, a new and higher stage of Socialist competition. Why new, and higher, stage ? Because the Stakhanov movement as an expression of Socialist competition, contrasts favourably with the old stage of Socialist competition. In the past, about three years ago, in the period of the first stage of Socialist competition, it was not necessarily connected with new technique. At that time, in fact, we had hardly any new technique. The present stage of Socialist competition, the Stakhanov movement, on the other hand, is necessarily connected with new technique. The Stakhanov movement would be inconceivable without new and higher technique." Such were the words of Stalin at the first Conference of Stakhanov workers.

The Stakhanov movement has a special importance for British workers, for it is just here where the whole conception of scientific Socialism, as developed by Marx and Engels, has been so vulgarised that this movement is being represented as something alien to Socialism. Not only is this so in reformist circles, but within revolutionary ones as well.

How often has the reader heard the statement from platforms :

> That we, the human race, have solved the problem of production and now the only remaining problem is that of distribution of commodities produced in abundance ?

Such statements have become the key, the easy guide in explaining what sort of a system Socialism will be ; so that the listener feels, as the speaker must also, that when the workers take over industry production methods will remain as they are, but the only change will be that the commodities " which now glut the markets of the world " will be distributed. From this the idea develops that Socialism is primarily a " system of socialist distribution," which is only possible when industry is socialised.

People who have these ideas of Socialism see in the Stakhanov movement something only essential for " backward Russia " in order to bring it to the level of large-scale industrial countries, but as a movement that

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would not be required in, say, Britain or Germany. They see in the following statement by Stalin something that only applies to Soviet Russia.

> Some think that Socialism can be consolidated by a certain material equalisation of people based on a poor man's standard of living. That is not true. That is a petty bourgeois idea of Socialism. In reality, Socialism can succeed only on the basis of a high productivity of labour, higher than under capitalism, on the basis of an abundance of products and articles of consumption of all kinds, on the basis of a prosperous and cultured life for all members of society.

The Stakhanov movement, and its place in history, is not something that has taken Marxists by surprise, something not accounted for in the works of Marx and Engels, any more than is the development of the new Soviet voting system. The change in Soviet elections is fully anticipated in the programme of the Russian Communist Party, and likewise even in the Communist Manifesto the rôle of the Stakhanov movement is explained. Contained in a nutshell in this first Communist Manifesto published in 1848 is the programme of the workers for all countries.

> The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all the instruments of production in the hands of the state, *i.e.*, the proletariat organised as the ruling class ; *and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.* (My emphasis.—E.W.).

Under a Soviet Britain would the existing productive forces be enough ? Would we have enough qualified technicians and have no need to develop masses of others as quickly as possible ? Would we have enough technical cadres ? Would a change in the economic system leave the masses of workers on their existing levels of culture ? Let your mind wander over the millions kept backward by imperialism. Could Lancashire industry produce enough cloth to immediately clothe the hundreds of millions who to-day, because of imperialist exploitation, live in conditions of famine ?

What calls on industry would the re-housing of Britain make ? Could industry existing in Britain cope at once with the demands ? If under a Soviet Government all the unsafe ships were broken up, and because of the increasing wealth of the peoples of the Empire, the trade turnover was greater, could the British shipbuilding industry build at once all the new requirements ? What calls would labour-saving devices, which every house should have, make upon industry ? One has only to run one's mind, as it were, casually over such problems, to be convinced that a Stakhanov movement would be an immediate and urgent need in a Socialist Great Britain. Already in Britain, there is a shortage of skilled workers due to a whole generation of youth who, during the crisis, have not been in industry. Capitalism, which is breaking up its factories, is also destroying its technical cadres.

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The capitalist class themselves, for war requirements, are becoming quite worried over this shortage of cadres for their industry, and under Socialism, where the higher life of the masses would cause the calls upon all industry to rapidly increase by astronomical figures, it is clear that one of our first requirements to clear the road for Communism, would be a Stakhanov movement.

Lancashire weavers are still the most highly skilled weavers in the world. Their finer and fancy woven cloths still hold their place in the world market, but if, to meet the demands of the new market of a free colonial people and the desire of every Lancashire weaver to get at least three good shirts and decent bed-clothes, the present out-of-date loom was scrapped and automatic ones put in their place, would the Lancashire weaver be equal to the change ?

At the moment the capitalist proposition is to scrap and keep part of the old out-of-date machinery. This is because with the low wages paid to the workers it would not pay the owners to buy good Northrop automatic looms. A Lancashire weaver used to work four looms and get a decent wage. They could hold their head on an equal footing with other skilled workers, but now they have to work twice as many looms for some half the wage. This is increased exploitation, but under Socialism exploitation will be ended. To satisfy the needs of the liberated millions of colonial peoples, will we ask Lancashire weavers to work more and more looms ? Certainly not, when we have in Lancashire textile machine factories shut down that could make the best automatic textile machinery which would make it possible to increase the output of cloth while making the work of the weaver easier. To carry this through would also require changing from mule spinning to ring spinning.

Let us see what would take place with Soviet power. It would not be won because every individual worker had developed a scientific understanding of Marxism, but because in the fight to live they had become the supreme class power, expressing it through their own government. The same Lancashire adage that " the proof of the pudding is in the eating " would continue to be the message to big masses of people in relation to the new government. But when the pudding was tasting better and as " life became more joyous " a new attitude to work would develop. An economic system every day gives birth to ideas. Capitalist ideology grows from the capitalist system. Likewise, after the socialisation of the means of production a complete change in men's minds takes place. By Socialism having already proven that it was the better system for the toilers, the masses are won to Socialist labour ; they will, by improved technique, commence to break the average production figures of capitalism. They will become conscious workers for Socialism. They will become Stakhanovite workers. Just as Spencerism became

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the label for speed-up of capitalism, if a Jack Bates or a Næsmith under Socialism showed the way to work more automatic looms, without increasing physical labour, then the Bates movement would signify the surging forward of the workers from Socialism to Communism. With a period of economic security, with no crisis and all the living evidence that a Soviet Britain meant the building of a new " Merry England," all the petty mindedness of capitalist ideology would become replaced by the outlook of the new Socialist system. The beginning of the age of plenty for the toiling masses would not have the demoralising effect such as the age of plenty for the members of the capitalist class has had. The working class would not become lazy, with the desire to idle about, as many capitalist observers viewing life from their own parasitic surroundings, are always pointing out. The working class have always been the creating class, and with the removal of the existing restrictions on production, the workers will quickly, to meet their own new cultural demands, carry industry forward to what might be at the moment, inconceivable distances. Mankind can never stand still on one level. If Socialism means that progress in the organisation and methods of production remain at their existing level, then human society will commence to degenerate. Socialism is a higher system than capitalism, just because it means a clearing away of the class that holds up industrial progress and represents the release of all social progressive forces.

In the Soviet Union technicians of capitalism helped to build new factories. They left their mark on Socialist industry. Soviet engineers studied hard at capitalist technical text books. The technique of capitalism, and its levels of production for a given plant, were as it were, taken too automatically. It is these limits on industry, placed there by capitalist ideology, that the Stakhanov movement is sweeping away.

The fact of the majority of industrial workers in the Soviet Union being a few years ago peasants, is one that should never be forgotten when the Stakhanov records are being taken. The technicians had to take these workers into account when assessing the *normal* levels of production for them. They estimated their possible progress, but entirely miscalculated the rate of progress under a Socialist order of society. These previously peasant workers went to night school ; they received every aid, and because they were being convinced by a material raising of their standards, that they were in reality, through owning the means of production, working for themselves, they developed a joy for work and for mastering the new technique. This first generation of industrial workers, not desiring to laze about on the levels that they have outgrown, have swept away all the lies of capitalist hack writers of how they would react under Socialism ; that they would never develop initiative, etc. They are sweeping aside the out-of-date *norms*, and in general have

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reached the level of the western industrial worker who inherited all the experience, the mental and physical qualities required for work in mechanised industry. To reach and surpass! Big masses are stretching out to reach, and large numbers have already passed, capitalist levels for the utilisation of technique. They are proving in practice that Socialism is a better system than capitalism. And as they work at increasing production with less labour, they see its results as creating wealth for their own class in greater and greater abundance. More meat, bread, best butter; the best of delicacies, not getting a skinful of cheap booze, but the best of wines on occasions they want a merry party, and to drink it in the latest cafe with the best of music. New houses, latest furnishings, tailor-made clothes . . . education and interest in the arts. These things . . . all that is best have already come the way of what must now reach millions in numbers of Stakhanov workers. To get machinery, delicacies were sent abroad but go into a workers' cafe and order some. The labels are printed in English—for America and Britain. This best is now being enjoyed by the workers. The more profits their factory makes the more money it is able to distribute by all the channels to the workers' services, through which all "socialist profit" goes in the Soviet Union. New schools, houses, holiday and health services, parks of culture and more of the best theatres; and in every way a brighter life on a higher level of culture for those who create the wealth. The elimination of capitalist ideology is now being completed in the Soviet Union. A new attitude to work, to machinery, to life is developing, as Marx always explained it would. Yet another chapter of the works of Marx is being lived through, with every word, every dot of the "i" and cross of the "t" have a more living meaning.

Under the greed of capitalism, the workers have to wage bitter struggle to get their "fair day's wage for a fair day's work." Under socialised industry the worker "works according to his ability and receives articles of consumption, not according to his needs, but according to the work he performs for society . . . ". "Communism represents a higher stage of development. The principle of Communism is that in a Communist society each works according to his abilities and receives articles of consumption not according to the work he performs, but according to his needs as a culturally developed individual." This was how Stalin put it, when he was showing the significance of the Stakhanov movement in "preparing the conditions for the transition from Socialism to Communism."

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BOOK REVIEWS

A GREAT REVOLUTIONARY FIGHTER.

Tom Mann. By Dona Torr. Lawrence and Wishart. 48 pp. 6d.

THIS is a brilliant little biographical sketch of Tom Mann. It traces his career from the day he was born at Foleshill, near Coventry, on April 15, 1856, right up to the present day. It describes how he started work at nine years of age "doing odd jobs in the fields"; how, at ten, he was set to work in the mines, "dragging away boxes full of coal or dirt for the men who kept the air courses clear"; and how later he became a printer's devil at Birmingham, and subsequently an engineer. It tells how the first strike in which Tom was interested was the Nine-hours' Day strike of the Engineers in 1872; how he came to London in 1876, at the age of 20; how, between that year and 1886, Tom worked in many different shops—Westinghouse, Cubitt's, Thorneycroft's, Brotherhood's, etc.; how he joined his Union in 1881, the same year as he read Henry George's "Progress and Poverty"; how he took a trip to New York, got a job for a few months and saw Brooklyn Bridge opened; and how, back in London, he joined, in 1885, the Battersea Branch of the Social Democratic Federation, to which John Burns, a fellow engineer, who soon became his friend, already belonged. It tells how, from then on, he became the restless, ardent propagandist and agitator, throwing himself with dynamic enthusiasm into the struggles of the workers, helping their organisation into the Trade Unions, pressing their needs and demands—particularly in respect to shorter working hours; and as the passionate advocate of Socialism. Then it tells of the great Dock Strike and the rise of the New Unionism, and the leading part that Tom played therein; how attempts were made to induce him to join the Church; how he joined with Ben Tillett in attacking the reactionary aspects of the Old Trade Unionism; how he became Secretary of the I.L.P. in 1894—from which he resigned in 1896, the year of the great engineers' lockout; and how he helped to start the Workers' Union in 1898. From then on, Dona Torr recounts the incidents in Tom's career with which the workers of the present generation are most familiar; his travels abroad, on the Continent, to Australia, South Africa, America and China; his advocacy of Syndicalism, and his later fervent adherence to Communism.

But Dona Torr does much more than all this. Our author gives not merely a summary of Tom's life in action, through the moving drama of the years, but traces his progressive intellectual development therein, and the reasons for it all. We are made to realise why this great live, verile, son of the working class has done what he has, and is what he is. Dona Torr gives us the economic, social and political background; clearly pictures for us the conditions of the working-class during the past eighty years, and throws into relief the reasons for their struggles. This booklet is not merely a biography, it is a profound social study. The fuller life of Tom Mann, which our author has promised to issue shortly, should be one of the best historical studies of our times.

There are, in my opinion, some slight errors made in perspective and judgment. I think Dona Torr is rather unfair to the old S.D.F., which set itself the political task of breaking the steel-like grip which Conservatism and Liberalism had on the working-class, in respect to its attitude towards Trade Unionism. No body of workers, pre-occupied as they were with their political Socialist propaganda, made such a big and permanent contribution to the building up and strengthening of Trades Unionism in this country as those in the old S.D.F. A close examination of the facts will prove this.

An appreciation of Tom Mann, as a personality, as a man and a leader, is, in

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itself, of considerable value in these days when leaders —devoted, self-sacrificing and capable—are so much required.

Tom Mann has well demonstrated his qualities as a leader. He has fine physical courage and the much rarer moral courage, the courage of responsibility. He can improvise means and methods under stress and difficulty. He can rouse and rally weak and dispirited forces and make from out of their scattered elements a united conquering force. He has always risen superior to countless reverses and defeats ; he has never been unduly elated by victory. Converse with him at intimate little gatherings ; hear him addressing huge demonstrations ; see him as the dauntless leader of strikes—strikes of hungry workers, workers under the pressure of hideous hardships and privations, and menaced by all the forces of the Powers that be—he is always the same, urging, encouraging, enthusing and stimulating in the struggle all with whom he has contact. He has been, he still is, the dashing cavalry leader of the working-class ; leading what have seemed "forlorn hopes," snatching victories from under the guns of the enemy. He is possessed of just those qualities that make the great military captain. More. In him is a large strain of the genius of agitation—of revolution. He has the gift of appraising the agitational possibilities of a situation, of focussing discontents, and leading them on and on, from small beginnings, up to a mighty elemental force. One of the best orators the British workers have ever produced, he can quicken and electrify and stir them into action as no other in the Labour Movement. Of his remarkable capacities as an organiser the Trade Union Movement can bear witness to an enormous degree.

Time and time again it has been a matter of regret, amongst those in the Trade Union Movement conscious of Tom Mann's gifts and qualities—as leader, agitator and organiser—that the T.U.C. and the Movement as a whole has not taken the best advantage of them. I recollect the late A. A. Purcell saying: "What a glorious national organiser Tom Mann would be for the T.U.C. If he was only given the job of addressing meetings and bringing in recruits he would do the work of any dozen I can think of." That is true. What folly it is which has restricted the magnificent services Tom could have rendered. Is it, even now, too late ?

TOM QUELCH.

THE OLDEST BRITISH COLONY—"A STUDY OF POVERTY."

Warning from the West Indies. W. M. Macmillan. Faber & Faber. 213 pp. 8s. 6d.

THIS book is worth reading if one is really interested in the lives and conditions of people in other countries. If, on the other hand, people purchase this book in the hope of reading some real quaint romantic literature, they will be not only sadly disappointed—they will be severely shocked.

> The beauty of the West Indies is a legend. Looking out from the dark, open terrace of a fine old Jamaica planter's house on one of their amazing nights of full moon and perfect temperature . . . . Behind near foothills, lies the vast semi-circle of the Blue Mountains, just fringed by the trade-wind with bright, changing cloud ; the rest of the sky is brilliant.

Behind this, the author states, it is easy to forget reality—old slavery and present squalor, and the author has set out with some success to show the state of affairs which exists in the oldest of British colonies, after centuries of British rule. And although this has been accomplished with telling effect, one is still left wondering if the trifling "remedies" which the author propounds would really be of any use whatsoever.

In reading this book one feels that the author, with his wide geographical knowledge, has conscientiously exposed the sordid existence of the great majority of the people of the West Indies. One is equally compelled to ask whether the author has not rather restricted his

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energies in the portion of the book dealing with the " Reconstruction."

Huge fortunes have been amassed in the West Indies since the British occupation in 1610, and it will shock the tender susceptibilities of the old ladies and the god-fearing public to read now that " A social and economic study of the West Indies is therefore a study of poverty."

This fact is somewhat different to the usual histories which portray the plundering of the West Indies as a " British naval and military romance or Caribbean gems in the Imperial Crown."

" Emancipation," from slavery the author writes, " only meant the substitution of a low wage for the previous outlay on the purchase and maintenance of slaves, besides absolving employers from responsibility."

How the great majority of the people live can be gathered from the following :

> Sir John Orr and others have often called attention to the under-nourishment which gives even Great Britain so large a " C.3. " population. Bread and tea, which perforce suffice so many, are no better than bread-fruit. But the essence of the problem of " backwardness " in most of the colonies is, that in a climate where disease is much more active and hygiene and sanitation only rudimentary, the economic resources of a much larger proportion of the population are if anything less than those of our own poorest classes.

Peasant proprietorship seems to the author to be one remedy for the appalling state of affairs, but even so, he is forced to admit that " experience is conclusive that peasant cultivation starts at an impossible handicap when it is set to work off such a high purchase price. In more obviously peasant islands like Jamaica, the best land is naturally dearer ; but not infrequently Governments have had inferior land palmed off on them for peasant purposes by the influence of those with land to sell, regardless of its suitability for peasant workers."

The author in his last chapter seems to be struggling to say something much more concrete than he does, and in that struggle he appears to have given way and adopted the usual method—some pious hopes :

> Our generation has come to recognise a " dual " mandate for the development of the people and the material resources of the colonies—the latter for the world ; but world interests and ours will best be served if we achieve at last complete singleness of purpose in directing development of the welfare of their own people.

The West Indies, like Newfoundland, have been sucked dry by the absent landlords and imperialist bondholders. Misery, starvation, squalid conditions and death is the lot of the population.

Such authors, genuinely stung by the appalling conditions of the people, offer no concrete solution to these vital problems. In fact, they cannot find within the framework of capitalism any real solution—but this fact they are afraid to admit.

The abolition of capitalism, the abolition of the landlords, the abolition of private property, they cannot advocate. Socialism, the only solution to the problems of the colonial peoples, is for others to advocate, and all those, who like the author Macmillan, are anxious to help the colonial peoples, must recognise this fact.

But Socialism will not be attained until these countries are no longer colonies ; until, that is to say, they have established their complete independence from all forms of imperialist domination. And that this is true can well be seen from the bitter facts of a poverty-stricken people which Macmillan sets out as descriptive of the inhabitants of the oldest British colony after no less than 326 years of imperialist " trusteeship."

P. G.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT LEIPZIG.

Dimitroff's Letters from Prison. Gollancz and Martin Lawrence. pp. 160. 6s. and 2s. 6d.

WHEN the three Bulgarians were hurriedly sent off to Moscow by aeroplane the prison authorities

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Mensaje al Proletariado de la Americana Latina. Universidad Obrera de Mexico, Mexico D.F. 19 pp.

Waters of Life and Death. A. Voronsky. (Allen and Unwin.) 343 pp. 7s. 6d.

Planned Socialism : The " Plan du Travail " of the Belgian Labour Party. By Henri de Man. (New Fabian Research Bureau.) 40 pp. 1s.

I Lived in a Slum. Mrs. Cecil Chesterton. (Gollancz.) 288 pp. 6s.

The Citizen Faces War. Robert and Barbara Donnington. (Gollancz.) 286 pp. 7s. 6d.

The Illusion of Immortality. Corliss Lamont. (C. A. Watts.) 294 pp. 8s. 6d.

Social Credit Discredited. Maurice Dobb, M.A. (Martin Lawrence Ltd.) 30 pp. 3d.

Dimitrov's Letters from Prison. (Martin Lawrence Ltd.) 160 pp. 2s. 6d.

Men and Mountains. Man's Conquest of Nature. M. Ilin. (Routledge.) 330 pp. 7s. 6d.

Sanctions Without Sanction. J. M. N. Jeffries. (Cullompton, Devon.) 14 pp. 3d.

Marxism and the National and Colonial Question. J. Stalin. (Martin Lawrence Ltd.) 304 pp. 5s.

The Poverty of Philosophy. Karl Marx. (Martin Lawrence Ltd.) 214 pp. 5s.

Food, Health and Income. Sir John Boyd Orr. (Macmillan.) 72 pp. 2s. 6d.

Thinking. Professor H. Levy. (Newnes.) 222 pp. 5s.

Fascism and National Socialism. Michael F. Florinsky. (Macmillan.) 202 pp. 10s. 6d.

China's Millions. Anna Louise Strong. (Gollancz.) 416 pp. 15s.

The Future of the Colonies. Leonard Barnes. (The Hogarth Press.) 46 pp. 1s.

The League and Abyssinia. Leonard Woolf. (The Hogarth Press.) 35 pp. 1s.

The Footsteps of Warfare : A Study of the Origin and Development of War. R. L. Worrall. (Peter Davies.) 236 pp. 7s. 6d.

Britain and the Soviets : Speeches of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union. (Martin Lawrence.) 197 pp. 6s.

Fascist Italy. Herbert Vivian. (Melrose.) 288 pp. 16s.

Soviet Science : Theory and Organisation, Physics, Chemistry, Applied Science, Biology. J. G. Crowther. (Kegan Paul.) 342 pp. 12s. 6d.

The Yellow Spot : A collection of facts and documents relating to three years persecution of German Jews. Introduction by Bishop of Durham. (Gollancz) 8s. 6d. cloth, 5s. paper.

Nigeria : A Critique of British Colonial Administration. W. R. Crocker. (Allen & Unwin.) 277 pp. 10s. 6d.

Internationalism and Zionism. S. A. Miller, B.A., B.Sc. (Federation of Zionist Youth.) 16 pp. 1d.

The Communist Challenge and the Zionist Reply. Joseph L. Cohen, M.A. (Federation of Zionist Youth.) 14 pp. 1d.

Genghis Khan. Ralph Fox. (John Lane.) 285 pp. 12s. 6d.

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were so unprepared that they forgot to search their luggage. The result is this book, which consists of the most important extracts from the letters and notes written by Dimitroff whilst in the hands of the Nazis.

It is a volume of absorbing interest, reviving memories of the famous Leipzig trial and revealing facts from behind the scenes which make Dimitroff's heroic stand in the court seem more wonderful than ever. "Fettered, I have to read and write, sit and sleep," he wrote to the examining magistrate at the end of April, but the protest against this barbarous treatment was ignored.

Dimitroff was handcuffed for five months. All through the most difficult preparatory period of the trials when he was preparing his defence in isolation from the world, the Nazis kept him fettered. "Even my *spectacles* have been taken away," he writes to Henri Barbusse soon after his arrest.

Dimitroff's notes for the speeches which he delivered with such power in the court conjures up a vision of this lion-hearted revolutionary conscious of the historic rôle he had to play, drawing inspiration from his knowledge of the masses whom he represented and steadfastly resisting all the tricks and torments resorted to by the degenerate Fascists.

The central idea expressed in all the letters and notes is the necessity of a *political* defence. Despite the pressure of the Nazi Advocate, Dr. Paul Teichert, the great revolutionary never for one moment thought of personal considerations. With great determination he worked at his defence which, as we know, finally became a damning accusation against Fascism and the Reichstag incendiaries. In this book we read how Dimitroff prepared those thunderbolts which he hurled at the miserable judge and the petty Goering.

This book presents us with an inspiring picture of Dimitroff, fettered but in action against Fascism. It also sharply reminds us of that other great figure, Thaelmann, already three years in the hands of the enemies of mankind. What Thaelmann has suffered we can only imagine. Surely

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the mass movement which tore Dimitroff free from Fascism's grip can also save Thaelmann? This book is a great weapon in the fight against Fascism and for the release of our imprisoned and tortured comrades.

W. R.

FACTS ON THE SOVIET UNION.

U.S.S.R. Handbook. Gollancz. 641 pp. 15s.

WE are told on the dust cover that this volume "aims at being a reasonably complete encyclopædia of everything about the U.S.S.R.," and it certainly succeeds. It is just the reference book about the Soviet Union that is so badly needed. All the material has been supplied by distinguished Soviet scientists and writers, and the English text has been arranged and edited by Dr. Louis Segal. The forty-one chapters covering not only economic, political and statistical information, but also Sculpture, Music, the Theatre, etc., tell you all you want to know.

W. R.

The LABOUR MONTHLY, though 15 years old, is as bold as any kiddy. It likes a birthday gift. So it has inserted both card and envelope to contain it. It hopes you've been able to respond.

LIST OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

(*For Appeal see page* 323.)

DEBT FUND.

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